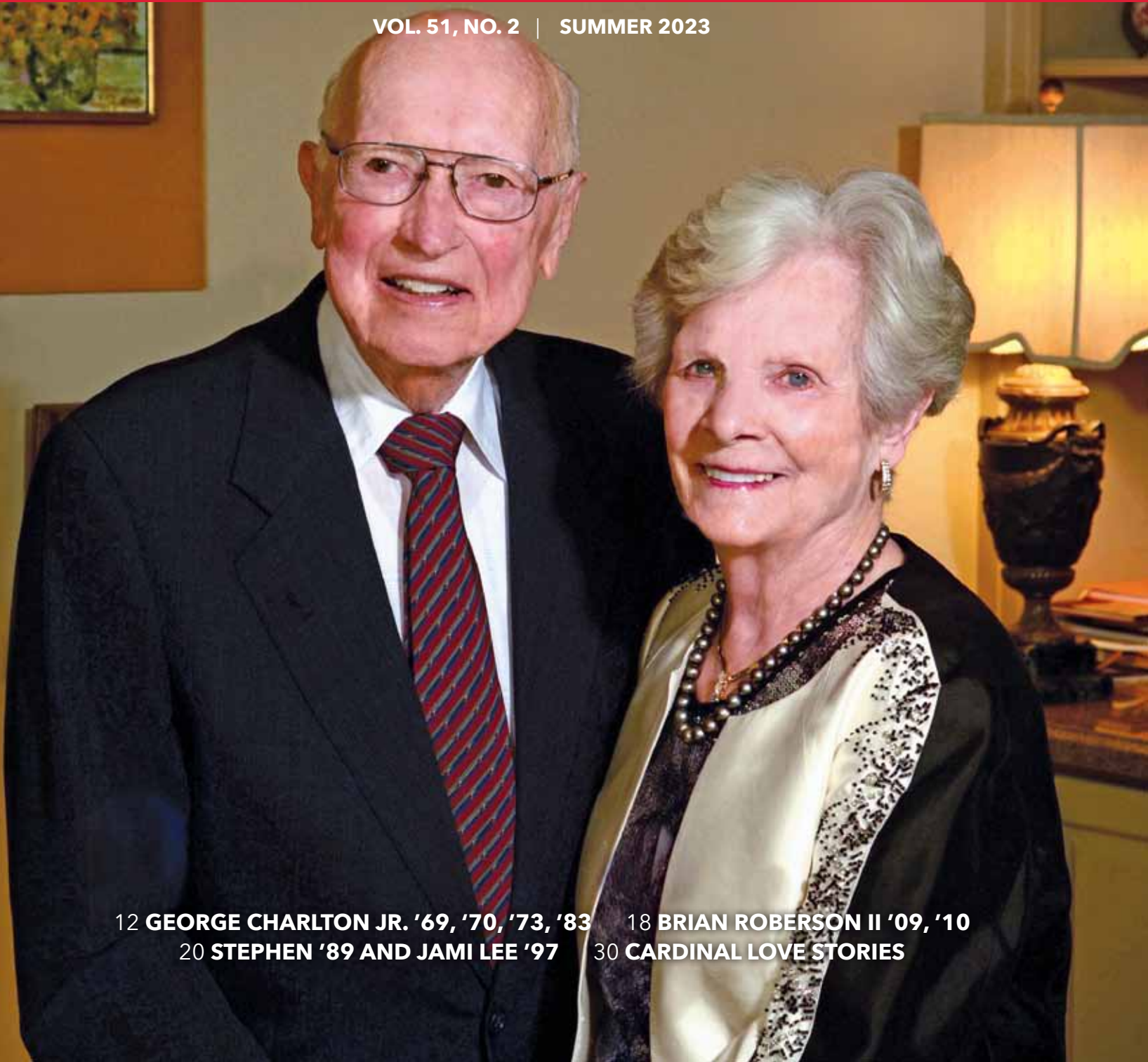


CARDINAL CADENCE

THE MAGAZINE OF LAMAR UNIVERSITY

VOL. 51, NO. 2 | SUMMER 2023



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| FROM THE **PRESIDENT** |



As a young (and slightly awkward) undergraduate student, I fell in love with physics and mathematics. My major provided me with a new perspective on the physical world, and that fascination has stayed with me throughout my professional life. Physics, in particular, is a powerful tool for comprehending a broad range of phenomena. Although much has changed on college campuses since my time as a student, the fundamental principles of physics still hold true.

Consider the simple machine known as a lever, which lies at the heart of everything from see-saws to crowbars to construction cranes. A lever consists of a rigid bar or beam supported at a fixed

point called the fulcrum. By applying force to one end of the bar, a heavier load at the other end can be lifted or moved quite easily.

When I first arrived at Lamar University, our centennial celebration was still a few years out. But it has been on my mind from day one. I knew it had the power to shape our strategic planning, motivate our alumni, and improve student success and employee morale. In fact, I am struck by how this milestone is very much like a fulcrum. In coming together to mark a century of service to this region, we transform ourselves from a loosely connected group of individuals into a team with a shared vision for the University's next century. In this way, our centennial celebration works as a fulcrum, allowing us to leverage the generosity of a single donor, the small acts of mentorship during an internship, or the quiet epiphanies in the classroom to produce an outsized response that propels us into the next century.

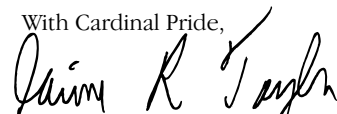
In this issue of *Cadence*, we feature stories about alumni who have leveraged their skills and passions to make a positive impact in their communities. One such alumnus is George Charlton Jr. '69, '70, '73, '83, who earned degrees in physics, mathematics and engineering before becoming a Subway franchise owner and philanthropist. His work with Community Action Project of Tulsa has helped low-income families access early childhood education. Another alumna, Hilary Deville '13, '17, turned her passion for geology and baking into a successful home-based business during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now a commercial bakery, Opal and Onyx creates unique cookie names inspired by natural science. Deville uses her success to promote women-led businesses, educate children in STEM and culinary arts, and donate to local non-profits, giving back to her community in meaningful ways.

As alumni and friends of Lamar University, *you* are the precious ore of our Cardinal fulcrum. Your experiences, achievements and contributions are a testament to the leverage of a Lamar education. As we approach this momentous occasion, we invite you to reflect on your time at Lamar and consider how it has shaped you as a person and as a professional. We also invite you to celebrate your own capacity to shape the lives of others for the better.

Our centennial celebrations this September offer a wonderful opportunity for us to come together and celebrate our shared history and future. Whether you attend events, donate to our initiatives or share your stories and memories with us, your participation is vital. Together, we can leverage the power of our community to create a brighter future for Lamar University students and the world beyond.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to celebrating with you soon.

With Cardinal Pride,


Jaime R. Taylor, President



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1,923 MINUTES
OF GIVING

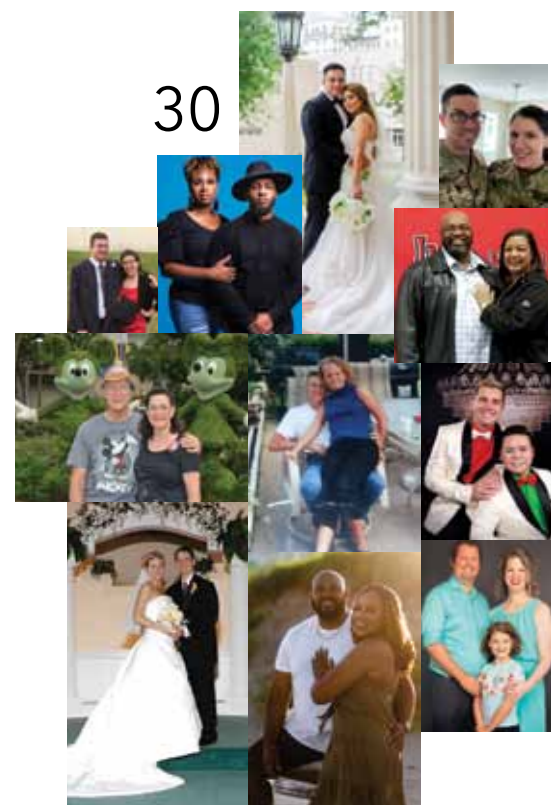


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Mentorship: Becoming who you are meant to be

The keen eye of a seasoned mentor can pinpoint the distinctive potential of an individual and lead to the most pivotal experience of that student's college career. Student reflections often begin, "Without the opportunity, I would never have imagined," and a mentor becomes a catalyst for the changes a student undergoes from freshman to knowledgeable and capable pre-professional. Mentees must have initiative and be motivated learners. Being a mentor requires an investment in each student's success and a significant time commitment—regular meetings; judging proposals and poster projects; training on lab equipment, safety and purchasing; supervision of research, publications and presentations; writing recommendation letters—but one motivation that links all mentors is the enjoyment and sense of accomplishment derived from seeing students comprehend their own unique strengths and witnessing a student's excitement as they realize their own ability to create new knowledge—the breath-stealing joy of discovery.



Robert Kelley Bradley

Assistant Professor, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering

RESEARCH: Nano Technology, Entrepreneurship

Students need to transition from consumers of knowledge to creators of knowledge. Simply taking undergraduate courses is usually not enough. Students need to make an inquiry into a topic that interests them, frame the inquiry in a way that is testable, set goals and objectives, and use their own ingenuity and hard work to achieve them. Students who follow this path gain self-belief and become better students, better citizens and better leaders. —KELLEY BRADLEY

I first met Dr. Bradley when I started working as a student assistant in the makerspace. I later completed an Office of Undergraduate Research grant under his supervision to develop an alignment method for single-wall carbon nanotubes. Most recently, I worked under his supervision to investigate biodegradable fillers for silicone composites. In Dr. Bradley's senior design course, I am on a three-person team working with Scallion Controls to develop a dashboard to share data with their customers and management. Working with him, I have learned how to write a grant proposal and how to conduct research. I have also improved my public speaking skills. Doing the research with Dr. Bradley, I have gained a lot of benefits by getting more involved at Lamar, meeting many people, strengthening my résumé and gaining confidence. —LAC NGUYEN, industrial engineering student

My own interest in mentoring began during my first year of college. As a freshman, I was surprised when a faculty member approached me after a large lecture class and mentioned that she had read my last assignment and thought I had a lot of "academic ability." I honestly thought she must have confused me with another, more promising student. Upon her insistence, the conversation continued, as did the relationship. Seventeen years later, the fact that her interest focused on my person, rather than my understanding of a component of her course, still motivates me to pursue mentoring relationships with undergraduate students. As a mentor, I seek to make contributions to the development of the person. This requires some understanding of the current state of intellectual and professional development and of dreams for the future. Each person I mentor is different, and different goals require different skills, but I aspire to help them develop certain universal skills—recognizing opportunities, asking questions, acknowledging shortcomings and communicating effectively. —LILIAN FELIPE

Dr. Felipe had brought me in on a project which evaluated the efficacy of the Semont procedure depicted on Youtube. I had the opportunity to help develop the study design. I also had the chance to assist with another study that she was performing with another student, which was a systematic review regarding post-concussive syndrome and balance disorders. After assisting her, I feel more confident in my abilities to perform research, understand research text and help develop study designs. I have the opportunity to utilize these skills at my current practice, and I will continue to do so in the future. Dr. Felipe fosters growth of every student, and she encourages passion for the vestibular specialization, which is not a common route to follow within the field of audiology. —MARCELLA MICHAELS '22, Au.D.

Lilian Felipe

Assistant Professor, Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

RESEARCH: Balance, Vestibular Rehabilitation, Electrophysiology, Cochlear Implants





Shannon Jordan

Assistant Professor, Department of Health and Kinesiology

RESEARCH: Oxidative Stress, Antioxidants, Ergogenic Aids, Obesity

in his field, he always had time to give me advice on surviving my Ph.D. journey. He was kind and gave me confidence to finish. His advice to me: Do not measure your success by your publications and grants. Measure your success by the mark your students leave on this world. Your legacy is the legacy of your students. How they are contributing to science, to the medical field, to help people...that is your legacy. I went to Clyde's memorial in Lubbock. He touched so many people's lives. Until then, he had been a retired professor who had offered me kind advice and inspired me to persevere. Several of his former students attended and shared how his mentorship had jumpstarted their careers. It was then that I realized what Clyde had been telling me and I burst into tears. I was looking at his legacy, who were now principal investigators and faculty mentoring their own students, teaching their own classes, leading eager undergraduate and graduate students on their first field collection trip. My goal is to continue his legacy as I build my own and strive for success through the success of my students.

—SHANNON JORDAN

Throughout my six years at Lamar University as both an undergraduate and graduate student, I had the pleasure of interacting with Dr. Jordan as both a mentor and a friend. She played a fundamental role in my growth and development as an academic. As a mentor and professor in the exercise science and fitness management program, Dr. Jordan never ceased to challenge me to do more, or to do better. Lucky for me, she saw something inside of me and new when I needed a push to take myself to the next level academically. As it turns out, many of the topics that she pushed me on have already become useful in medical school. While many of my classmates have never been exposed to the clinical correlations of the classroom materials, Dr. Jordan always makes sure that her students are aware of the real-world application of what they are learning (something missing far too often in higher education.) In addition to this, her door was always wide open if I had any questions about lecture content, related materials, or academic advising. This willingness to help me only further fueled my fire to constantly improve. —CADE JOHNSON '19, B.S. biology, B.S. exercise science and fitness management

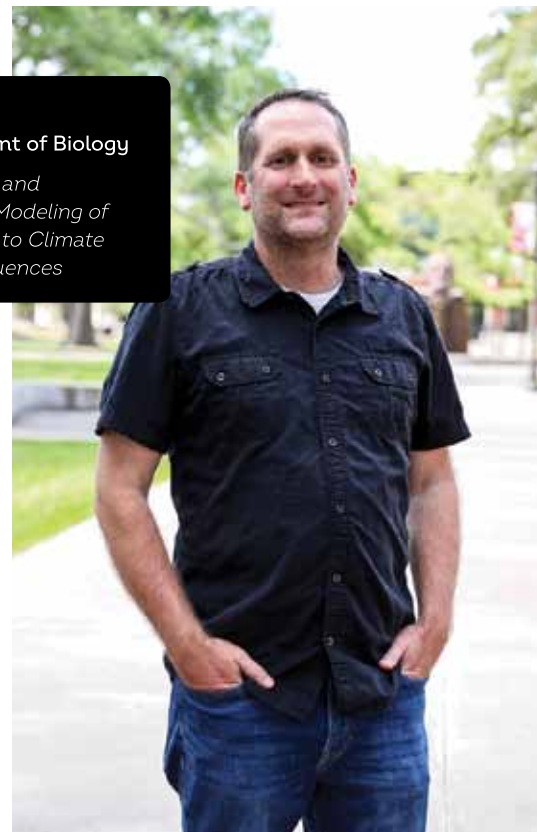
Each of the upper-division courses I teach comes with a lab that provides an excellent opportunity for students to think like a scientist and adjust to real-world situations. The most common thing students tell me they love about these courses is the fact that they get to go outside into the field, whether to identify trees in the forest for Ecology, collect organisms in a lake for Limnology, or collect insects from Village Creek for Aquatic Entomology. The irony is that the most difficult thing they tell me they experience in my classes also relates directly to those field experiences. My objective is to have my students experience the full scientific process: collect data in the field, organize the data in the lab, statistically analyze the data, and then present their results in a report. While they often love the first part—going outside to collect the data—the rest of this process is often frustrating for them because the data they collect is messy, with complicated results. But we persevere. I advise them on how to interpret those results, because their messy data never produces straightforward answers. It is really satisfying to see a student grapple with and finally understand data that they collected. My goal is to help guide them and keep them from making serious mistakes that could hinder their development, while allowing them to grow as scientists and as individuals. —MATTHEW PYNE

My journey with Dr. Pyne started before I ever stepped in his classroom. Shortly after I joined the biology department, I was recruited to be an undergraduate assistant to one of Dr. Pyne's grad students at the time. Her thesis research involved doing wildlife surveys of alligators along the Neches River. This meant that I got to go out on the boat late at night with Dr. Pyne, Jamie and a few other assistants shining spotlights trying to locate alligators until the wee hours of the morning. This was, of course, the highlight of my sophomore year. I also got to see firsthand the work that went into a graduate thesis and how much the guidance from a professor made a difference in the experience. Every time he was out on the boat with us, Dr. Pyne was helping Jamie with her research and giving her advice. I could tell he was invested in her and her work and wanted to give her the best opportunity to succeed. I decided right there on that boat that if I was ever going to grad school here at Lamar, I would choose Dr. Pyne as my professor. At one point just prior to graduating, I was panicked about the possibility of grad school, and Dr. Pyne was the first person I thought of to talk to. I sent him an email asking to meet with him, all the time wondering if he'd be too busy to see me considering I was no longer his student at that point. He immediately responded to schedule an appointment with me, and we spoke the next day. He provided me with very frank and helpful advice, and to this day I have not forgotten how much that conversation made me feel better about the future, regardless of the path I would take. —VERONICA SEALY '20, environmental science

Matthew Pyne

Assistant Professor, Department of Biology

RESEARCH: Aquatic Organisms and Freshwater Systems, Statistical Modeling of Aquatic Communities Response to Climate Change and Anthropogenic Influences





Gevorg Sargsyan

Assistant Professor, Finance, Department of Business

RESEARCH: Non-profit Organizations, Risk Management, Financial Management, Real Estate, Tourism, International Business, Local/Rural Economics

I love engaging in undergraduate research with our students. It is my strong belief that undergraduate research and experiential learning can be a life-changing experience. It changed my life and opened endless opportunities for me. I published my first paper during my senior year at college, which was the result of one year of undergraduate research. I view mentorship as an investment in the next generation, and I'm sure that the time faculty invested will one day come back to Lamar University and Southeast Texas. My mentoring philosophy is based on acting as a coach and facilitating a positive and efficient learning experience. Undergraduate research allows students to absorb knowledge, develop analytical skills, and become critical thinkers. What inspires my mentoring

at this institution is that Lamar University has a diverse student population and provides an opportunity for many students who would not have had a chance to have an undergraduate research experience. This makes me feel that my current position is a mission for me, not only a job. My interactions with multidisciplinary faculty and students during the conferences/meetings/expositions/other events of the Office of Undergraduate Research and McNair program has been one of the most fulfilling experiences I have had at Lamar. It has helped me to grow and allowed me to help students in many ways. –GEVORG SARGSYAN

I have had the opportunity to learn and work alongside Dr. Gevorg Sargsyan in the past couple of years. It all started in the Summer of 2020 when I was in search of acquiring research experience. I started working with him that summer and presented at EXPO 2020. Then we applied for the OUR grant, McNair Scholars Program, and SURF grant and were victorious. As a mentor, Dr. Sargsyan helped me in all aspects of carrying out a research project. When I was discouraged with the response rates I was having, he was there to encourage me and offer different avenues of conquering them to be efficient and effective. He was always willing to help despite everything he did for the students at the College of Business. In all sincerity, it has been a true pleasure working and learning next to him. Dr. Sargsyan has encouraged me to seize opportunities as they come. He has informed me of various opportunities that have helped me grow as a person and a student. Whenever he sees potential in his students, he invests his time to make sure that they become who they are meant to be. –VIVIANA DENOVA '22, B.B.A. management



Thinesh Selvaratnam

Assistant Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

RESEARCH: Energy-positive Domestic Wastewater Treatment, Bio-remediation of Industrial Wastewater, Water Treatment and Testing Systems for Emergencies, Food-Water-Environment Nexus

Over the past five years, I enjoyed mentoring more than 190 undergraduate students in academics, research and professional development activities. Lamar University is different from most other research universities. We have a robust undergraduate program in addition to our

graduate program. Therefore, it is paramount to utilize our undergraduate students in research activities to enhance the university's overall research portfolio. Over the past five years, I have mentored seven undergraduate students directly in my algal-based research activities, which yielded four peer-reviewed publications with undergraduate students as co-authors. In addition to the publications, data produced from these activities have been presented in multiple national and local conferences. Witnessing our students flourishing in industrial and academic careers is one of the most rewarding aspects of student mentoring. As a mentor, I always strive to be a good listener, a good communicator, thoughtful, empathetic and inspiring. I firmly believe that it is impossible to be a good and effective mentor without being a good listener. This will help students build a strong research experience for the next few years and eventually improve their chances of building a successful academic/industrial career.

–THINESH SELVARATNAM

I first met Dr. Thinesh in my first semester when he taught my introduction to civil engineering class. When I would have a difficult time solving a problem, he would

make sure that I understood why I was doing something rather than just showing me what to do. Dr. Thinesh keeps this same mindset when it comes to mentoring and has been very helpful throughout my research journey. Prior to starting college, my future goals were unclear, and I never considered that research was a path I could take until Dr. Thinesh introduced research to my freshman class. He has many accomplishments and has played a major role in many of his students' accomplishments. During my second semester, he encouraged me and another undergraduate research student to apply for the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship. We were both recipients of this fellowship and worked in his micro-algal lab throughout the summer. His dedication as a mentor is strong, and he encourages his students to be the best version of themselves. He has inspired many students to partake in research and will undoubtedly continue to inspire many more. –MELISSA TAN, student

I see teaching as a medium through which I can communicate to and enlighten members of society on science/STEM education, a field that fascinates and excites me. I consider teaching to be an evolutionary process, always adapting to meet the educational needs of students' demands of society and the constantly changing parameters and horizon of knowledge. The process of teaching is a collaborative one; the instructor and students forming a partnership in investigating and discovering current views and trends in the field. Both teachers and students learn from each other. Furthermore I believe that for effective learning to occur, students need to be engaged, which requires student-teacher interaction. The instructor must also be able to tailor the subject and coursework to be accessible to the student as well as intellectually challenging, whether in a graduate or an undergraduate class. Irrespective of whether students pursue careers in science or STEM education, I am keen that my students learn processes and patterns in the subject and be aware of the tools and techniques used in gathering relevant information. –MAMTA SINGH

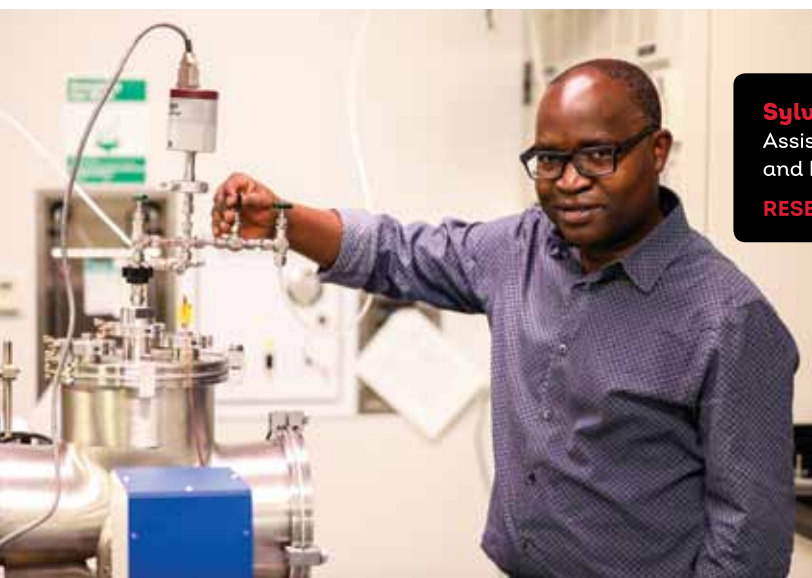
Mamta Singh

Associate Professor, Department of Teacher Education

RESEARCH: Science Education, STEM Education, Environmental Education, Action Research, Pre-Service Teachers, Pedagogy & Pedagogical Content Knowledge



Dr. Singh's dedication to her students and to her research inspires emulation by her students. Her caring and encouraging attitude brings out their best. Additionally, Dr. Singh constantly pushes her students, future teachers, to incorporate technology and research into their lesson plans. I have personally known Dr. Singh for nine years now and have had the privilege of being enrolled in three of her classes. She was a vital part of my success in my interdisciplinary studies degree. While in Dr. Singh's Science Methods course, I developed a guided inquiry lesson plan about renewable wind energy with another student. After presenting the lesson to our class, Dr. Singh asked us to present it again at the Joint Spring Meeting of the Texas Sessions of APS, AAPT and SPS. My classmate and I successfully presented our middle school science lesson plan to a room full of highly educated people in the physics field, and it was all thanks to Dr. Singh. I never would have considered taking such a step without the support of her as my mentor. Dr. Singh pushed me to do things I would not have considered doing without her encouragement, and it undoubtedly made me a better student while at Lamar. Now as a teacher, I continue using her wisdom and guidance. She made me a more confident and capable individual. –SAMANTHA (REICHARDT) SULLIVAN '18



Sylvestre Twagirayez

Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

RESEARCH: Physical Chemistry

From a personal perspective, I have to say that working with students has been an exciting and rewarding part of my work here at Lamar University. As a research mentor, my simple philosophy is that students can be trained for any research project provided that they are supermotivated. My academic journey as a teacher began in fall of 2016, and since then, I have taught over 1,800 students. I enjoy interacting with students in class and outside class, and my door is always open for extra help if it is needed. These interactions have opened opportunities for me to learn more about student drives and served as excellent recipes to promote research, thus leading to the recruitment of 10 undergraduate students to work on meaningful projects in my research group. My mentoring goals have always focused on training students to think and reason using standard scientific practices. Many of my students have presented their research papers at local and domestic conferences and published their results in peer-reviewed

journals, showing that research can be personally relevant and rewarding. In return, these experiences can enable students to connect with their own research interests and develop scientific skill sets that I hope are useful for their future scientific career development. –SYLVESTRE TWAGIRAYEZ

Getting into pharmacy school is competitive and I knew I needed to be able to stand out as an applicant. So, while I was taking general chemistry with Dr. Twagirayez, I reached out to him to see if he had any research opportunities available. I specifically reached out to Dr. Twagirayez because I enjoyed his teaching methods (personally, I think it's quite a skill to be able to make colligative properties, entropy or chelation reactions interactions interesting). Also, he was always responsive to questions that I had after class and encouraged intellectual curiosity. We discussed possibilities and decided to look at the fluoroquinolone antibiotic norfloxacin and its interaction with divalent cations. While this research project was not "groundbreaking," Dr. Twagirayez provided me the knowledge and insight about how research is conducted and how to present research posters, knowledge I use today in pharmacy school and will continue to use as a pharmacist/pharmacist resident. –JALON BARNES, 2023 Pharm. D. candidate



Mentorship in action: Providing guidance to the next generation

by Jeff Spoeri

C.L. Ross '83; Roy Steinhagen; a NASA Astronaut manikin; Ken Evans, former LU president; and Marcus Rodgers '20



When Marcus Rodgers '20 came to Lamar University in the fall of 2016, he realized that establishing his career path in engineering would

need to include co-ops and internships. In fact, Rodgers explained that one of the primary selling points of LU over other universities he was considering was the broad spectrum of internship offerings of which he could take advantage. "I was always told that co-ops and internships are vital for getting good engineering positions," Rodgers recalled, but at another, larger Texas university, he was told they didn't have such programs. "They told me, 'We want to get you in and out as fast as possible,'" so his path to Lamar was pretty well set at that point. What Rodgers didn't anticipate, though, was the importance of having a strong mentor to help pave his way. He found that in longtime NASA executive and LU Distinguished Alumnus C.L. Ross '83.

Rodgers and Ross met at one of LU's annual "Dinner and Conversation"

events, which connects alumni in a variety of fields with students aspiring to careers in those disciplines. Ross, who serves Johnson Space Center's Safety and Mission Assurance Directorate management staff as an SMA technical assistant for NASA Artemis Moon Program, Marshall Space Flight Center Moon Lander Development and the ORION Program, along with supervising the business management office for the directorate—with responsibilities ranging from contracting and risk management to information technology and data security—saw Rodgers' potential in their first conversation. When Rodgers secured an interview for NASA's Pathways internship program, which identifies college students with long-term potential to assist with NASA's future workforce needs, Ross put in a good word for his Lamar compatriot, and Rodgers was accepted to the program in his sophomore year.

Ross' own journey to NASA was notably different. A native of Port Arthur and a graduate of Lincoln High School, his teachers and his parents stoked his interest in science from an early

age. "My parents used to buy me those little science kits, where you could mix different things together and make things," he explained, "and so when I was a little kid I developed an interest in science." His parents also took a young C.L. on a tour of Johnson Space Center in nearby Houston and bought him some "moon books" at the gift shop that he still has on his bookshelf to this day, which he used as motivation for achieving his professional aspirations. Eventually he enrolled at Lamar after some time at another university in Texas, and he describes that move as "one of the best decisions I ever made." However, despite always wanting to work at NASA and applying multiple times for internships, Ross was never selected. He applied one more time, a month before his December 1983 graduation, for an entry-level quality engineering position in astronaut altitude training, but this time his persistence paid off: he was hired in January 1984 and has remained at NASA ever since. "I was challenged in that environment," Ross recalled, about working with engineers who had graduated from Texas A&M, MIT, Purdue, Harvard and other prestigious



ROSS

institutions, “and being a minority in that environment was also a challenge. But I started applying what I learned at Lamar...I competed with those guys, and we got to the point where they were asking my opinion on designs.”

Today, Ross and Rodgers are NASA colleagues. Rodgers parlayed his three NASA internships—in-flight operations, engineering and robotics—into a full-time position upon graduating from Lamar as an aerospace engineer at Ellington Field in Houston with specialties in payload integration and design, and he serves as deputy Gulfstream project engineer, in which capacity he is responsible for design and installation of containers for scientific instruments to be placed in the aircraft for experiments during flight.

Rodgers’ advice to current students includes, unsurprisingly, pursuing and completing internships in one’s desired field, noting that through them, “you learn what you want to do and what you don’t want to do.” Rodgers added that extracurricular activities proved to be a boon to his success as well, and that he also learned a great deal from a study abroad experience in South Korea and from his service as a Lamar University Ambassador. Likewise, Ross would encourage students seeking to follow in their footsteps to adhere to four primary principles: “be true to yourself, be smart enough to know what you don’t know, don’t let anyone discourage you from your aspirations and speak truth to power.”

LAMAR’S PIPELINE TO NASA

Over the years, Lamar University has proven to be a fertile ground for producing NASA scientists and engineers. A few notable examples of LU alumni and friends who made their mark in America’s space program include:

John Hirasaki ‘64

A native of Vidor who studied mechanical engineering at Lamar State College of Technology, Hirasaki was one of just two men to be quarantined with the Apollo 11 astronauts—Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins—following their journey to the moon in 1969. Hirasaki, a NASA Landing and Recovery Division engineer, joined the three space pioneers immediately after splashdown for a three-week isolation period, including a 65-hour trip back to Houston, that included debriefings, medical tests and caring for a priceless cache of moon rocks and film. Today, Hirasaki is retired and living in California after some four decades of professional achievement in the space industry.

Scott Millican ‘63

Millican majored in industrial engineering at Lamar State College of Technology before embarking on a 15-year career at NASA, stretching from the Apollo days to the beginnings of the Space Shuttle program. For the first several moon landing missions, including Apollo 11, Millican trained the astronauts for on-the-moon activities and spacesuit operations. He also was the book manager for the Lunar Surface Checklist prepared, but never used, for Apollo 13, which returned to Earth successfully after avoiding near-catastrophe—but without landing on the moon—in 1970. After leaving NASA in 1982, Millican pursued opportunities in the space industry in Europe and today is the founder and owner of HE Space Holding BV, a space consulting firm headquartered in the Netherlands, and he divides his time between there and Houston.

Evelyn Miralles ‘90

Originally from Venezuela, Miralles earned a bachelor’s degree from Lamar University in computer design, thereby developing a passion for computer science and technology that led her to two subsequent degrees, a second bachelor’s in computer information systems and an M.B.A., from the University of Houston-Clear Lake. She went on to become chief principal engineer for the Virtual Reality Laboratory at NASA’s Johnson Space Center, where she designed and co-wrote state-of-the-art virtual reality software that has been used to train astronauts on every space shuttle and International Space Station mission since 2000. Among other awards, Miralles was named one of the 100 top inspirational women in the world by the British



Broadcasting Corp. and one of the top 20 most influential Hispanics in the U.S. by CNET, and she is a recipient of NASA’s “Silver Snoopy Award” for space flight safety. Miralles currently is a highly sought consultant, educator and public speaker in the field of virtual reality.

Charles “Chuck” Royston ‘61

Royston, a Lamar State College of Technology electrical engineering graduate, worked for Boeing immediately after graduation, then joined NASA in 1964 where he was active on all the Apollo missions. He helped design the Apollo communication system and was involved with numerous spaceflights in Mission Control, from which he managed the video feed from Apollo 11’s inaugural moonwalk on July 20, 1969, that was broadcast live worldwide. His tireless effort to help the Apollo 13 crew return to Earth safely the following year led to President Richard M. Nixon awarding him and his team the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Later, Royston worked on the inaugural U.S.-U.S.S.R. *Apollo-Soyuz* mission in 1975, which was the first international crewed space mission in history. He went on to work for the U.S. Navy supervising the manufacturing and upgrading of the Trident submarine missile launchers before retiring from the aerospace industry and authoring several fiction books.

Milton Dunnam, member, Lamar University Spindletop Society and Legacy Society Dunnam, whose wife Myrna ‘67 is a Distinguished Alumna of Lamar University, worked at NASA as an engineer with Hughes Electronics Corp. and its successor Raytheon Corp. Aerospace Engineering Services Division. Among the many contributions Dunnam made to NASA and the space program during his career, he was involved in the historic recovery effort to bring the Apollo 13 astronauts safely home in 1970. He also co-wrote a critical protocol for managing and transmitting messages between simulation computers, which increased the efficiency and efficacy of training for astronauts and other personnel handling the responses of spacecraft scientific payloads. Retired today and living in Baytown, Texas, Dunnam consistently notes the excellent preparation and skill of Lamar University graduates, whom he and his companies heavily recruited for professional positions over the years.



Champions of Education

Charles and Gloria Locke

by Lauren Wilson

Few can claim to have loved Lamar University for as long or as dearly as Charles and Gloria Locke.

"I feel so lucky," said Charles, who graduated in 1944, among the very first class to attend on the campus that Cardinals now call home. "My 97 years, you've got to remember, have mostly been spent with Lamar in my life. And how lucky I am!"

For Gloria and Charles, going to school came—as Charles says, "during a time of great confusion for our country"—right on the heels of World War II, when for many, a college education was an opportunity out of reach. Now, nearly eight decades later, students pursuing their dreams across a wide range of disciplines do so with the generous support of the Lockes, who

have established an extraordinary *seven* scholarships at Lamar University. When talking about their scholarships and the impact that they have had at LU, the couple emphasizes how fortunate *they* feel—lucky to have had an education themselves, lucky to have connections with the people of LU, and lucky to be able to give back. "I don't think we're due any commendation," Charles said. "It's something that we're so glad we've been able to do."

Despite the generations between them, the Lockes reflect that LU students of today share similarities with those of the past that transcend the distance of time and circumstance. "Young people are not much different than they've always been. They're interested in doing well and interested in making something of their life," Charles said. "They're like we were. It means a lot to them." In the years that they have supported Lamar University, the Lockes have met many of their scholarship recipients, whose stories affirm the couple's profound belief in the power of education to change lives and shape communities. "Some," Charles relates, "come from homes where they have to work extra hard to get through school, and they do! And they make a wonderful life for themselves and others along with them – it's not just themselves; it's the people connected to them. It brings tears to my eyes when I think about that."

There is indeed a sparkle in Charles' eye when he talks about Lamar University—about the students, faculty and staff of today and of days long past, about the campus where hundreds of students became thousands, about humble beginnings that have paved the way for bright new opportunities. He smiles to recall how President John Gray himself would greet him personally by name and smiles wider to know that LU still feels like a family, all these years later. As Charles sings the university's praises, Gloria affectionately notes that though she never attended LU herself, her husband's enthusiasm and their years staying involved have long since won her over. "Oh, I love Lamar," she says. "I tell you what," she adds with a fond smile, "as you can tell, Charles wants to sell you on Lamar. He'll make a believer out of you."

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP:

ExxonMobil

by Susan Johnston Taylor



From its beginnings as Standard Oil in 1859 to its place today as a worldwide conglomerate, ExxonMobil values the cultivation of new talent. Its Beaumont refining facilities, built along the Neches River in 1903, have provided jobs and training ground for LU alumni and students, and its status as one of LU's long-standing industry partners has resulted in decades of financial and program support. The company has donated more than \$7,768,000 to LU programs since 1983, and the ExxonMobil Foundation Presidential Scholarship was funded in 1984. It has since helped nine students pursue engineering degrees. More than 350 Lamar graduates now work at ExxonMobil worldwide, with 208 assigned to Beaumont.

The company also sponsors a Cardinal NEST at Amelia Elementary—an elementary school/LU partnership focused on teaching STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) concepts—and further supports Lamar through ExxonMobil Charitable Giving Programs. Employees can contribute to nonprofits through the matching gift program or volunteer hours for grant funds. Since 2000, program matching gifts and grants for volunteer hours have generated over \$2 million in support for LU.

ExxonMobil's commitment extends beyond dollars to include student and alumni networking opportunities,

internships, mentoring and employee volunteering on initiatives like Lamar's Green Squad, on-campus activities and mock interviews. The past two years have seen 110 employees interact with close to 400 students, faculty and staff during 28 events.

Lucia Babar '14 is among them. After earning her bachelor's degree in chemical engineering, Babar started work at ExxonMobil, and she's now the clean products business coordinator. Babar initially interviewed with fellow alum Jennifer Vaughan '06, a chemical engineer, and knowing they shared an alma mater immediately put Babar at ease. She now considers Vaughan to be a mentor.

Babar also volunteered and hosted a table at the LU Alumni Office's Dinner and Conversation event, which pairs successful professionals with students by career field. "We've got a pretty good network [at ExxonMobil]," Babar says. "Once people know you went to Lamar, everybody checks on you."

Nakisha Burns '02, ExxonMobil's Beaumont area public and government affairs manager, says that the partnership between Lamar and ExxonMobil reaps benefits on both sides. "We bring out different student organizations to engage with our employees, to talk to them about the different careers, not just engineering," she said. For instance, Lamar business students tour the facility and learn about operations. Employee resource groups such as the

Black Employee Success Team also work with student groups to conduct mock interviews and résumé critiques.

Paul Ivory '24 is an ExxonMobil intern and a member of the National Society of Black Engineers. "Being able to work with a Black man as my supervisor and have him as a mentor, it's really inspiring to me every day," Ivory says. "Seeing their level of competence, it's propelling me to be that same person for other people."

Jacqueline Salmeron '26 says of her internship with ExxonMobil: "I'm really looking forward to being able to apply what I've learned in the classroom."

Kelvin Elgar '24 has done multiple internships but says his experience at ExxonMobil has been the most eye-opening. "I've been able to get myself into a real-world mindset that is super transferrable to the tests, quizzes and homework that we have in class," he said. "On top of that, it's just great to see the concepts that we learn in those engineering classes being applied in real life."

As Lamar celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, Burns predicts that the long-standing industry partnership will continue. "We have been a part of the Beaumont community for over 120 years, and Lamar is very close to our operations, so it's important to us," Burns says. "It's exciting for our employees to be able to help those students understand our industry and how our industry is changing with different technology."

A 'peculiar vision' of the world

Tulsa businessman, LU legacy alum says service is "the perfect career"

by Casey Ford

The history of education in Southeast Texas is written in the lives of LU alumnus George Charlton Jr. '69, '70, '73, '83, and his family. From 1869 to present day, the Charlton name is synonymous in this part of the state with equitable and inclusive public education for students of color.

In 2014, Charlton's great-grandfather, Charles N. Charlton, was posthumously inducted into the First Pioneers and Leaders of the State of Texas Hall of Honor for his role in establishing and leading the first Black schools in Beaumont in the latter part of the 19th century. Charles Charlton was a freed slave and one of a group of Black community organizers whose efforts led to the establishment of the historically all-Black Charlton-Pollard High School in 1918, of which his son, T.J. Charlton Sr. was the first principal. Though the school no longer exists, its highly organized alumni association remains active in heralding its history and in supporting the education of young Black people in Southeast Texas and beyond.

Charlton Jr.'s father, George Sr., and his mother, Clementine, each had long careers as Beaumont educators. At a tumultuous time in the nation's mid-20th century civil rights struggle, when Lamar State College of Technology admitted few African-American students, Charlton and several of his five siblings earned degrees in various fields. His brother Spencer Charlton '76 is a contract compliance officer with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and sister Lauretta Lewis '74 retired recently after a long career as a pharmacist. His sister Camille (Charlton) Jackson '70 is a retired teacher for Anahuac school district, and her husband, Felix '72, is the manager of his family's ranch in Anahuac, the Jackson Brothers Ranch, which has been in his family for generations.

Based today in Tulsa, Okla., as a Subway business owner, Charlton's first professional positions were in Southeast Texas industry. After completing dual undergraduate degrees in physics and mathematics at LU, he went to work for Gulf States Utilities. GSU provided him an opportunity to return to LU as a graduate student for an engineering degree, after which he went to work for Gulf Oil. During his early career in the petrochemical industry, he returned to LU once again for an M.B.A., where his research contributed to early pay-at-the-pump gasoline technology. Around 1990, Charlton relocated to work in leadership for Explorer Pipeline Co. in Tulsa, where his ventures in small business ownership began.

D.R. Stewart, staff writer for *Tulsa World*, said Charlton "always has had a peculiar vision of the world that allows him to see possibilities where others see only challenges. Like his predecessors, he can see inside a place and its people to imagine new infrastructures and growth potential." Charlton opened the first Subway restaurant in Oklahoma over 30 years ago, in Stillwater, and in only a few months thereafter he ended his career in the oil business and expanded his franchise to four restaurants. He went on to become a development agent for the company and has helped open more than 100 restaurants, a phenomenal growth reported by *The Oklahoman* in 2005. At the request of the president of the corporation, Charlton spent a year helping Subway enter South Africa after the election of Nelson Mandela.

In addition to what he calls "the perfect career" with Subway, Charlton serves on the board of directors for Community Action Project (CAP) of Tulsa, a nonprofit whose mission is to help young children in low-income families grow up to achieve economic success and help end cycles of poverty by combining high-quality early childhood education with innovative family services and resources. He has been on the CAP Tulsa board for many years, since the organization





emerged to replace Head Start services that had been decertified by the federal government. As a Tulsa business leader, Charlton was invited by the governor to make the CAP program competitive as a bidder to reinvigorate early childhood education intervention in the state. At the program's emergence, Charlton served as its executive director until a permanent director was placed, then he served as chairman of the board, and he has served the organization as an officer ever since. According to *Guidestar*, the program enrolls more than 1,900 Tulsa County children ages birth to five into one of the agency's 10 preschools or an evidence-based home visiting program. Its services are designed for young children from low-income households, with most

enrolled families earning below the federal poverty level. CAP Tulsa serves children and families with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, with over one-third speaking a language other than English at home.

Charlton and his wife are also partners in a new community development center in Tulsa that serves underprivileged families. With a 90% Hispanic staff, this program includes a full range of care options including educational, physical health, behavioral health and disabilities services, with a focus on preparing children for kindergarten to improve the likelihood of their future academic success and overall well-being.

On the phone, Charlton sounds young—distinguished and wise but

authentic and good-humored—and he talks about his businesses and philanthropy as if he has only just hit his stride. At a time when men of a certain age would have already slowed toward retirement, Charlton seems far from it, and now his trajectory is circling back around to his historical foundations in community education and outreach. His charge to the LU community is to keep doing what it has always done well, which is to care about each other and lift each other up. His life—past, present, and future—are a testament to this kind of care and to his family's legacy as school pioneers in Beaumont, Texas, and their mission to champion equitable access to education for all children.

Dream Makers

We express our deep gratitude to the alumni and friends of Lamar University who have recently established endowments or made plans to endow gifts through estate plans. These gifts encourage students to pursue a college education and support faculty in creating innovative learning environments. An endowment creates a legacy that becomes a permanent part of Lamar's history. To learn more about how you can endow a gift to Lamar, we invite you to visit our website at lamar.edu/development or to start planning a gift through your estate, visit legacy.lamar.edu. In this issue of Cardinal Cadence, we are honored to recognize these Dream Makers.

by Mackenzie Linscomb

The Lamar University Black Alumni Network established the **LU Black Alumni Network Scholarship** to cultivate an environment where Lamar University Black Alumni can be celebrated, connected and supported throughout their lifetime. The leaders of the Lamar University Black Alumni Network at its founding are Aaron Lavergne '17, Aliyah Thomas '16 and Weslynn Morris '17. Lavergne graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from LU. Thomas earned a Bachelor of Science in Corporate Communications, and Morris graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. This scholarship was established with the intention of giving back to students who are actively involved in the Black Alumni Network Mentee/Mentor Program and are members of an organization supporting African American students at Lamar University.

Joseph Marcus Mejia taught chemistry at Lamar University from 1960 until his retirement in 1996. A dedicated educator, Mejia has a strong passion to continue his legacy of teaching by supporting those who seek to also become teachers at the high school and middle school levels, specializing in sciences and/or math instruction. He attended Texas A&M University, where he earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees in chemistry and pursued doctoral studies. After joining the faculty at Lamar University, Mejia participated in three National Science Foundation programs that focused on teaching science to teachers. He conducted this work at the University of California Berkely and the University of Minnesota. Mejia also spent two summers pursuing additional graduate studies at Louisiana State University. In creating the **Joseph Marcus Mejia Scholarship for Science and Math Educators**, Mejia hopes to inspire others to follow his lead and to share their love of science and math with today's youth.

Steven and Candie (Holt) Tramonte '98 established the **Dudley B. and Leta M. Holt Scholarship in Electrical Engineering** in honor of Candie's parents. Dudley B. '84 and Leta M. Holt married in 1972 and began their family

in 1974 while Dudley served overseas in the Navy. Their children, Byron and Candie, were born while Dudley served in the Navy, and when Dudley's service was completed, the family moved to Southeast Texas. While Dudley worked full-time, he attended Lamar University at night and earned his degree in electrical engineering in 1984. That was possible because of Leta's support and her dedication to raising their young children. Later, Leta began working in the human resources field while Dudley worked as an electrical engineer for DuPont. Leta and Dudley stressed the importance of hard work and education, and their example and guidance resulted in successful careers for both children. Dr. Byron Holt has recently been named as the chief of cardiology at the Dell Children's Medical Center in Austin, as well as the division chief of pediatric cardiology at the Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin. Candie (Holt) Tramonte currently serves as a chief accounting officer in the energy industry in Houston. Dudley and Leta's lasting legacy is having raised a loving family that happened to have had successful careers. Their love for God, family and hard work and their focus on education will always provide a shining example for their family and friends.

Jack Brock established the **Jack C. Brock Political Science Scholarship**. Brock has shared that "Lamar University has allowed me with a limited budget to be the first in my family to obtain a college degree. My Lamar degree provided the foundation for my entry into University of Houston Law School where I obtained a juris doctorate and subsequently obtained my Texas license to practice law. I have been blessed with a successful and rewarding professional career which all began with my college education." It is Brock's hope that this scholarship will provide an opportunity for other Lamar students to complete their degree and move on to a personally and professionally rewarding career.

Kathleen Thomas along with family, friends and colleagues of Dr. George Thomas '67 endowed the **Dr. George E. Thomas Memorial Scholarship** in

his memory. Thomas graduated from Beaumont High School in 1963. He continued his education as a math major at Lamar University, where he joined the Epsilon Kappa chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha and developed lifelong friendships. After graduating in 1967, Thomas continued his dream to become a physician by attending medical school. After 11 years of practice in Dallas, he decided to return home to Beaumont. He would go on to establish his own practice from the ground up, with the mission to provide compassionate, quality healthcare, known today as Beaumont Internal Medicine and Geriatric Associates, BIMGA. Thomas humbly served Beaumont's community for 50 years. There will never be the right words to describe the love that surrounds him, but those who knew him will forever cherish him and hold his memory near, carrying on his legacy of compassion and selflessness.

Myrna (Pirnack) '67 and Milton Dunnam established the **Myrna J. Dunnam and Milton J. Dunnam Scholarship in Business**. Myrna J. Dunnam is a native of Groves. She obtained her Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing in 1967 from Lamar University and her law degree in 1978 from the University of Baltimore. Myrna had an active family law practice in Baytown, Texas, and was board certified in family law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Milton J. Dunnam worked for many years as an engineer for NASA contractors at Johnson Space Center in Houston. Milton worked on several of the Apollo moon missions including the memorable Apollo 13 mission. The Dunnams live in Baytown and have also established a planned gift that will add transformational funds to this scholarship.

Lifelong Southeast Texans Terri and Lee Potter are both alumni of Lamar University. LU has been and remains instrumental in facilitating their successful business, which allows them to give back to the community and the university. Terri is a graduate of Nederland High School, and while enrolled at Lamar, she was a cheerleader for the Cardinals. Lee graduated from West Brook High School. While at Lamar, he joined Alpha

Tau Omega Fraternity. Lee played a major part in securing an endowed scholarship at Lamar on behalf of the ATO Alumni Association. Their business, American Air Systems Inc. recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. Terri and Lee sit on several boards and are involved in the American Cancer Society, Leadership Beaumont and Rotary of Beaumont, as well as other non-profits in Southeast Texas. "Because of Lamar, the Southeast Texas community and the blessings that have been bestowed upon us," Terri and Lee established the **Terri and Lee Potter / American Air Systems Inc. Scholarship in Business** to give back and provide opportunity to a deserving student wanting to make a difference.

Southeast Texas Medical Associates (SETMA) Foundation Inc. endowed the **Southeast Texas Medical Associates Foundation Regents Scholarship for Nursing and Premedical Studies**. SETMA was founded in 1995 by James L. Holly, M.D. and Mark A. Wilson, M.D. Their desire was to form a group practice and design a healthcare delivery system that would integrate all the various components of a family's health needs in a multi-specialty setting. Since inception, SETMA has embraced the Triple Aim of "improved care, improved health and lower cost." The partners and executive management of SETMA have also formed a long-term residual care team called "I-CARE," which ensures their patients the best of care when they require residential care. SETMA's achievements include numerous national recognitions for innovative work. Lamar University was chosen as the beneficiary of this scholarship because SETMA has been part of Beaumont's community for over 20 years and believes in giving back to its community. This gift continues that legacy by providing future generations of Lamar students assistance in pursuing careers in nursing and medicine.

Nancy Evans was born Dec. 2, 1949, near San Francisco, Calif. Nancy always knew she wanted to spend her career as an educator. After retiring from teaching for many years, Nancy supported her husband Ken's career in academic administration, including his role as

president of Lamar University. As First Lady of Lamar, Nancy transformed buildings and open spaces on campus through her efforts to advance public art. She founded Lamar University Women and Philanthropy to bring women together to learn more ways to give, manage their money and become closer to their communities. Nancy passed away June 22, 2018. Gifts received in honor of her life, her bravery and her commitment to her family and community helped to endow the **Nancy W. Evans Endowment for Women and Philanthropy** in her memory.

Dr. Alan B. '80 and Julie (DuBois) Coleman '80 established the **Celia Dominguez Coleman and Gilberto Dominguez Scholarship in Art Education**. Celia Coleman taught at All Saints Episcopal School for 43 years and enriched thousands of students' lives with the cultural knowledge that she gathered while traveling around the world. Celia taught as an adjunct professor at Lamar University. She has led a life of giving back to her community, including serving as chair of Lamar University's Le Grand Bal, social chair of the Neches River Festival and president of the Beaumont school board. Celia's father, Gilberto Dominguez, migrated to Silsbee, Texas, with his wife, Consuelo, in 1921. Gilberto worked for Santa Fe Railroad as a carman for 60 years. He loved the arts and was an expert wood craftsman who carved countless pieces of furniture, which he enjoyed giving to his friends as an expression of his love and gratitude. Gilberto stressed the importance of education and giving to his family. His children attended college and later excelled in their fields of education, accounting and engineering. He is remembered for his love of the humanities, wood carving and the pursuit of knowledge.

The Locke family, individually and through the Helen Caldwell Locke and Curtis Blakey Locke Charitable Trust, have been faithful supporters of Lamar University for over 30 years. The Lockes are inaugural members of the Lamar University President's Circle. The **Locke Family Scholarship for the College of Education and Human Development**

represents the sixth scholarship endowed by the Locke family. Their scholarships support the students at Lamar University in the areas of theatre, dance, communication, engineering and business in addition to a scholarship open to all majors. The family's ties to Lamar University began with Charles Locke who graduated from Lamar College in 1944 with an Associate of Arts degree. Charles and Gloria Locke's son, David, earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management from LU in 1976. Robert Cobb, the husband of Ann Locke Cobb (Charles and Gloria's daughter) graduated from Lamar University in 1978 with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing. Charles and Gloria have supported Lamar in many ways through organizations such as Le Grand Bal, Friends of the Arts and Friends of the History Department to name but a few. They have also served the Beaumont community in many philanthropic and leadership positions throughout the years.

DeWitt Scott was born in 1924 and grew up in the coal mining region of eastern Oklahoma. Like many men of his generation, he left school to join the Marine Corps soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He was a decorated Marine Corp veteran of the Pacific Campaign. While on leave from the war, he met Nita Mixon, and they were married after a whirlwind two-week courtship. In 1957 he moved to Port Arthur with Nita and their two sons, William and Dick. He was an active volunteer for the Boy Scouts of America and instrumental in getting both his sons involved in scouting. In 1975, the family organized EconoRail Corp. This business continued to grow and expand until it was the largest bulk handling port operations business in Texas and handled more than 11 million tons of bulk products in 2004. DeWitt remained active in the business until his death in 1995. Without question, the work ethic he instilled in his sons was an important part of the company's success. William '70 and Gay Scott '80 established the **Nita and DeWitt Scott Memorial Scholarship** in his parents' memory to give back to the

community of Southeast Texas, which has supported their family business for years.

Rodney (Rod) Rice Sr. '66 graduated from Lamar University State College of Technology in 1966 with a Bachelor of Business in Accounting. He subsequently became a certified public accountant. He worked for Gulf States Utilities for several years before and while attending Lamar. After working as a field agent for 10 years with the Internal Revenue Service in Beaumont, he was recruited by Gulf Consolidated Services and worked as assistant vice president of operations for the company and its subsidiaries. Rod and his family formed Fitness Expo in 1983 and were among the first entrants into distribution of fitness equipment in the commercial and retail markets at the local level. His children, Rodney Jr. and Georgia (Rice) Horton '82 were the mainstays of growing the business within a new arena of marketing. Rod and his wife, Norma, are members of the Mirabeau Society and President's Circle and have been donors to Lamar University for over 30 years. Rod served on the Lamar University Foundation Board of Trustees from 1992 through 1996 and has been serving on the College of Business Board of Advisors since 2013. It is Rod's hope that the **Rice Family Scholarship in Business** will support Cardinal students for many years to come as a way of thanking Lamar University for its continuous support.

The Tri-City Corvette Club started around 1976. It promotes fellowship among Corvette owners through Southeast Texas and is a civic-minded organization that is community-oriented in its support of local charitable efforts. The club has provided Corvettes for parades at various festivals, homecomings, car rallies and other special occasions. They donate their time and resources to the students at Buckner Children's Village, Southeast Texas Food Bank, Jefferson County Foster Children's Program, The Humane Society of Southeast Texas and the Texas Military Honors Team. For many years, the club managed and provided scholarship funds to deserving high school students. In 2013, the club made the decision to partner with Lamar University Foundation

to establish the **Tri-City Corvette Club Scholarship** to provide funding to deserving students at Lamar University.

The Southwest Chemical Association established the **Southwest Chemical Association Scholarship in Chemical Engineering** for the benefit of students at Lamar University who are pursuing a career in chemical engineering. Southwest Chemical Association is a not-for-profit petrochemical industry organization that was established in 1977 with the mission of supporting and developing the next generation of chemical engineering students. The organization has a long-standing relationship with Lamar University and, as such, this endowment represents their commitment to working with the university and its students.

Judy A. Hammond '72 endowed the **Gladys and Bill Hammond Scholarship** in honor of her parents, Gladys and Bill Hammond. Gladys was a retired executive secretary for Gulf States Utilities Co., now Entergy. She did not have the opportunity to attend college but was very efficient in assisting her bosses with their work. In addition to her work at Gulf States, she was very active in the Delta Zeta Sorority Parents Club. Bill Hammond, better known to many as "Uncle Willie" from radio and television in the Golden Triangle, studied journalism. His career in broadcasting began with a Sunday afternoon radio show on a small daytime radio station. He was playing the usual assortment of salon-type music when he was overcome with a burst of "devilment." Capital Records had just sent him a copy of the children's record "Bugs Bunny in the Tortoise and the Hare." So, he went from a recording of Rigoletto into Bugs. The idea was an instantaneous success, and "Uncle Willie" was born. The show first aired on KPBX and then on KFDM Radio and TV. It was one of the first local radio shows of its type, and as he was quick to point out proudly, "The time was right for such a show." The show was on television from 1955 to 1963. In 1973, he finally retired as film director from Channel 6. The goal of this scholarship is to help Lamar students pursuing a degree in communication.

Friends and family of Tony Martin '79, '80, established the **Dr. Gabriel A. "Tony" Martin Memorial Scholarship** in his memory. Martin received his master's degree in audiology and speech-language pathology and his bachelor's in deaf education and communication disorders from Lamar University before earning his doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi. He spent most of his career at Lamar, beginning as an assistant professor of deaf education in 1989. He began a long tenure as the chair of the Communication Disorders and Deaf Education Department in 1994 for over 20 years. Martin was instrumental in setting up the doctoral program in deaf studies and deaf education at Lamar University. In addition, he was very involved with Association of College Educators-Deaf/Hard of Hearing (ACE-DHH), serving multiple times as an officer. He was also the director of program evaluations for the Council on Education of the Deaf (CED) for six years. His most recent position at Lamar was as executive director of the Office of Planning and Assessment (OPAA) and liaison with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

As one of Lamar University's most successful and distinguished alumni, David J. Beck '61 represents the vital role that Lamar has played in the lives of generations of students. He also represents the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, dramatically enhanced through creative programs, initiatives and ideals that serve to improve the educational experience. Beck graduated from Lamar State College of Technology in 1961 with a Bachelor of Science in Government. In 1999, he was recognized by Lamar University as a Distinguished Alumnus. Beck established the **David J. Beck Teaching Excellence Award** to provide Lamar University the opportunity to honor and reward those faculty members who excel as teachers or otherwise bring significant honor to the university through their pedagogy.



Great stories make great mentors

by Casey Ford

Brian K. Roberson II '09, '10, affectionately called “Governor” by many since his days working in LU residence life, admitted with some irony that Lamar University was not his first choice of college until it became clear that it would be his then-girlfriend’s first choice. Once she lured him to LU, though, he says key people like Valarie (Black) Daniels; Art Simpson '95, '16; John Payton; Freddie Titus '83, '86; and Norman Bellard '79 met him at the door and made him a fightin’ Lamar Cardinal forever. Some readers might know him as the guy who taught them the LU fight song, but before he brought crowds of people to their feet at Cardinal games, these longtime LU mentors and others stoked his energy with their own and helped direct Roberson’s steps toward becoming the impressive educational leadership figure he is today.

Today Roberson is principal at B.F. Terry High School in Houston, one of six high schools in Lamar Consolidated school district whose



area is roughly the same as that of the entire city of Dallas. He was named 2022 Principal of the Year by the Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators, following on the heels of his 2020 title of Assistant Principal of the Year, when he worked for Houston school district. These accolades are only the most recent in a career that blossomed during a decade of phenomenal leadership experience.

It all started when Roberson, a first-year LU student-athlete, went to apply for a book scholarship in Bellard's office, where the charming and funny young man was joking with the administrative assistants. Bellard poked his head in, leaning on the door frame to ask about "the commotion," and the two had their first of many chats about Roberson's future. Bellard offered him his first campus job as a community assistant, normally reserved for older students. The opportunity was not lost on Roberson, who also worked in Rec Sports and as a student orientation leader. Bellard, Simpson and Payton counseled and mentored him through the ups and downs of undergraduate life. Simpson imparted the wisdom of a "keep your head down" work ethic. Bellard intervened if he saw Roberson struggling. "Sit here," he'd say, "so I can see you with my good eye." Payton would walk around the weight room in their 8 a.m. strength conditioning class bellowing, "Work to get better!" Roberson says these relationships were lifeblood to him; these mentors treated him and all students with respect, like humans and family.

Speaking of family, on a recent leadership activity at Fort Bragg, Roberson called out "Work to get better!" A woman turned and asked him to say it again. "Work to get better!" he said in Payton's voice, to which she replied, "My grandfather used to say that." Payton was her grandfather, and she was an LU alumna. Roberson says these kinds of encounters spring from relationships that are the cornerstone of all good leadership, but especially educational leadership, in which one is leading, instructing, directing, developing programming and ensuring compliance

for large groups of people, both professionals and students.

Roberson first dreamed of being a principal as a seventh grader, but after college he decided to pursue a path in higher education, taking his first administrative job as director of housing and residence life at McNeese State University. Not long after that, though, he moved back to Houston to work for the Urban League, and an opportunity arose to coach and teach special education for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. He jumped into secondary education, and from there, Roberson completed his M.Ed. in Educational Technology Leadership at LU. Several principalships later, he says he is living his real dream.

Roberson credits his seventh grade assistant principal, Mike Connors, for speaking life into him, for being lenient and forgiving when he could have been less so. Roberson decided he wanted to be that person for other kids who needed nurturing from a caring adult. Connors, who was back then a 50-something year-old, blue-eyed, white-haired fellow, was the adopted son of a man named Winston Churchill Connors and couldn't have been from a more different world than Roberson, but they had a bond, a relationship that transcended culture and upbringing. It is the relationship that showed Roberson he could mentor even people totally different from himself.

And he can effectively lead those who may not buy in right away to his vision. So much of his work and service has put him in front of huge groups of people who saw him as an advocate and role model. "The Governor" learned early on that this came with a higher degree of responsibility to himself and others, and he learned through trial by fire that he could work with people who might push against him. He says this, too, is about relationships and storytelling. He transparently shares his own stories, even stories of his mistakes, with people under his leadership, and he advocates that they do the same. It is a guiding principle that allows him to connect with colleagues who may disagree with him and students who are struggling and making mistakes.

Authenticity, humility and vulnerability are key to those connections. Recently Roberson encountered two young men as he was checking out in the line at Kroger. They were store employees, and one of them cursed audibly when he saw how much cargo Roberson had loaded into his cart. Roberson engaged. He asked them if this was their first job, and they replied that it was. He then asked them what their last jobs were going to be, and they were quiet. Both said they hadn't thought much about it yet, what their futures would look like. It gave Roberson an opportunity to tell them that his first job was with Kroger, and that sometimes when his job as a principal is tough, he often wishes he could work there again. He left them knowing he had made an impact.

When you see Brian Roberson, ask him for a story, and he'll tell you a good one. It might make you laugh or cry. It might be about him or one of his students, or it might be about bumping into Dade Phelan at an alumni mixer to chat about HB 4545, but you'll find yourself in the story somewhere. It's a superpower he has – Fight, Lamar U Cardinals! – and it's only getting stronger.

STEPHEN AND JAMI LEE:

A *family* connection, an enduring commitment

by Brooke Barnett

For Stephen '89 and Jami Lee '97, supporting Lamar University is a family affair. Stephen's older brother Paul '84 played football for Lamar, and Stephen grew up watching LU basketball games in McDonald Gym. Both Stephen and Jami are proud Cardinal alumni, and their son Mitchell '21 followed suit by becoming a Lamar graduate himself. Their involvement with the university has spanned three decades, a fact which Stephen says directly influenced his personal and professional success.

Stephen received his Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from LU in 1989, and has served as the chairman, president and CEO of First Financial Bank-Southeast Texas for the past 15 years. He has more than 25 years of experience in community banking, commercial lending, sales and executive management.

"There is no question that my education, my relationships and my experience at Lamar were all foundational in shaping my current career," he explains. "I have been blessed with tremendous opportunities and fortunate to have been able to take advantage of many of those to grow both personally and professionally. My time at Lamar was foundational in where Jami and I are today."

Jami comes from a long line of educators, with her parents and members of her extended family having served as classroom teachers and school administrators. After spending a few years in the classroom, Jamie decided to complete her graduate studies before starting their family. Jami graduated with a Master of Education in Administration in 1997, and the couple went on to have two sons, Mitchell and Michael.

"I heard great things about the LU College of Education and Human Development from fellow educators, so I believed it was a perfect place for me to attend," Jami reflects. "I loved that Lamar University offered small classes, taught by exceptional professors. I felt they truly cared for their students, and their teachings were practical and relevant. Most of the students in my graduate program were from schools throughout southeast Texas. We were in different stages of our career and lives, so we benefited from learning from each other."

Stephen and Jamie were proud to have their eldest son Mitchell complete his undergraduate degree at LU, while following in his father's footsteps as a successful student-athlete. Stephen lettered in football, while Mitchell played baseball. Mitchell graduated *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor of Business in Accounting in 2021.

"I have lots of incredible memories associated with my football career at Lamar," Stephen reflects. "Wins against Northern Illinois and Northeastern Louisiana the year they won the national championship were incredible, but my most cherished memories are the relationships I established with teammates, students, coaches and faculty that I still maintain today."

Giving back to Lamar University has been a priority for the Lees, who value being able to stay connected to the university that has been a steadfast pillar of their family's history and success. In 2022, he and Jami were honored as LU President Circle members.

"I am proud to say that Lamar University is my alma mater. I am beyond grateful for the education I received at Lamar," Jami says. "We are fortunate that we have the opportunity to give back to the university that provided so much for our family."

"Lamar is very important to me and my family," agrees Stephen. "I have been and continue to be engaged with Lamar leadership, Lamar athletics and the business school as they all played a critical role in shaping my career. Although the University has changed a great deal since I graduated, its mission remains very similar. I want to make sure I am doing my part to promote its continued growth and success."

Promoting Lamar's continued growth has included Stephen serving as a member of the College of Business Advisory Council, a Cardinal Club board member, an Alumni Advisory Board member and director, and a Dinner and Conversation host. He also sees the important role that Lamar plays in the career development of his employees at First Financial Bank.

"The majority of our Lamar graduates we employ at the bank today started with the bank and then went on to get degrees while working. We consider Lamar University and our local state colleges incredibly valuable partners in the continued education and development of our workforce," he explains. "We have been involved for several years in working with LU to identify and educate students about the broad array of opportunities provided through the banking industry and have also discussed different avenues to advance and accelerate these conversations. This remains an area of opportunity for our bank, our industry and for Lamar."

Opportunities for giving back to the community continue to motivate Stephen. He serves as a member of the Texas Bankers Association and a director for the Baptist Hospital System Foundation, the Lamar State College-Orange Foundation, the 100 Club of Southeast Texas and the Luther Theater. He has



held leadership positions with both the Kiwanis Club of Orange and the United Way of Orange. He was also presented with the Walter F. Johnson Award from First Financial Bank for his leadership efforts in the Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

In 2021, Gov. Greg Abbott appointed him to the Texas State University System Board of Regents. The Texas State University System comprises four universities and three state colleges that all operate with an independent mission, unique management, specific educational focus and community identity.

“I am thrilled with this opportunity and flattered that the governor selected me to serve in this capacity,” he said. “As a member of the Southeast Texas community, I am keenly aware of the importance and transformational impact that these colleges and universities have on our economy by providing affordable secondary education opportunities to many first-generation college students. Ensuring these institutions have the appropriate resources and management to achieve their missions is critically important, and I am honored to play a role in shaping and facilitating their goals.”

Throughout their continued affiliation with LU, it always comes back to the family connection and the importance of relationships for the Lees.

“I think I am most proud of Stephen and all he has accomplished throughout his career,” Jami concludes. “Stephen loves giving back to the community where he was born and raised. He has a servant’s heart and is the hardest working and most loyal person I know. We have been blessed with 31 years of marriage and a beautiful family. We are grateful for the wonderful education we received and the long-lasting friendships we have made at Lamar University. We are happy to be part of the future of LU.”

**The Ties That Bind Us:
Living Legends**

LU Career Consultant Nicole Kyles-Burton '17 moderated a panel discussion of faculty and Greek participants Feb. 15, recognizing 11 alumni and retired faculty as living legends in honor of their extraordinary contributions to their life professions. The African American/Black Student Organizations and the Division of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations hosted the event. Not pictured is Addie Allen '71, Delta Sigma Theta panelist.



From left, retirees Vernice Monroe, 1970-2008, emeritus associate professor of social work; Richard Price, 1970-2006, former associate professor of mathematics; and Lula Henry, 1987-2020, emeritus associate professor of teacher education.



From left, Greg Pumphrey -'73, Omega Psi Phi; Thurman Bartie '92, Kappa Alpha Psi; Lillie Gilford Lloyd '71, Alpha Kappa Alpha; and Kenneth E. Lloyd '73, Alpha Phi Alpha



From left, student Blake Wilson, Nicole Kyles-Burton '17 and Freddie Titus '83, '86, vice president of diversity, inclusion and community relations.



From left, Zelinka Deal '96, Sigma Gamma Rho; Regina Holmes '73, '79, Zeta Phi Beta; Audwin Samuel '80, Phi Beta Sigma



Distinguished Alumnus Anthony '88 and Michelle George



Distinguished Alumnus Pat '71 and Melody (O'Reilly) Parsons '71



Carol Dishman Buckley and Brenda (Allred) McMakin '83



Beverly '77 and Fred Escamilla



Brenda Wilson, Terri Sherlock, Denise Smith



Chris and Melanie Bibb from Houston with Tracie (Wilson) '97 and James Payne



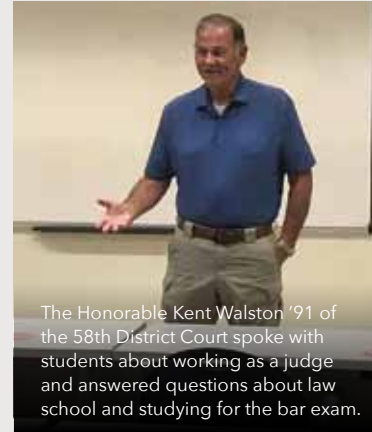
Distinguished Alumnus Wayne Reaud '71



Distinguished Alumnus The Honorable Nicholas Lampson '68, former U.S. and Texas 9th District congressman, spoke to students Oct. 12, 2022, during a joint event with Student Government Association and Omicron Delta Kappa honor society.



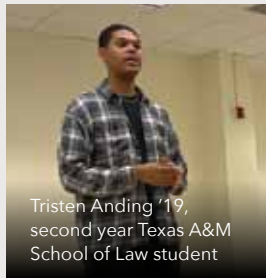
The Honorable Gordon Friesz '97 of the Jefferson County 317th Civil District Court spoke to students Sept. 27 about his work as a family law attorney.



The Honorable Kent Walston '91 of the 58th District Court spoke with students about working as a judge and answered questions about law school and studying for the bar exam.



Corporate attorney for Wilson Elser Dani Sanders '17 spoke to pre-law students about corporate law and mental health.



Tristen Anding '19, second year Texas A&M School of Law student



Raegan Minaldi '20, third year LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center student

Cardinal law community shares talent

We wish a Big Cardinal Thank You to law professionals and alumni law students for returning to campus to speak to pre-law students during Pre-Law Society meetings and the Future Lawyers Cardinal Community last fall.



Matthew Minick '11, county attorney for Hardin County, talked to students about the work he does and also about the difference between law school and undergraduate work and the bar exam. He offered students the opportunity to shadow him and to come to court.



Chief of the Appellate Division Waylon Thompson '82 and Andrew Huebel '17, misdemeanor division, both with the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office, talked with students about becoming prosecutors.



Attorney and Beaumont City Councilman Audwin Samuel '80 spoke to students about his work as a defense attorney.

Pairings: In support of Dishman Art Museum

Pairings celebrated 10 years Jan. 20, 2023. LU's unique viticultural event, founded by Roy and Kim Steinhagen, featured a five-course dinner paired with wines of Silver Oak. Chairs were Lee Ann (Dean) '79 and Terry Garth, along with Kim and Roy Steinhagen. Funds support exhibitions and programs of the Dishman Art Museum.



Event Chairs: Terry and Lee Ann (Dean) Garth '79 with Roy and Kim Steinhagen



LU vs. UIW

After the LU vs. UIW basketball games in San Antonio Feb. 9, from left, Jeff Spoeri, associate vice president for university advancement, joined Joel Hannemann '81, retired school administrator in the Houston area; Coach Alvin Brooks '82; and former basketball player Kenyon Spears '01, senior associate athletic director for administration at UIW.

Where have Ambassadors flown?

More than 100 exceptional LU students apply for a coveted 15 available positions each year, facing a competitive application and panel interview process to become a Lamar University Ambassador. The few that are selected enjoy training in leadership as well as personal and career development, remembering it as a uniquely invaluable experience that helped them become successful young professionals. A few of them share their thoughts below.

Long Nguyen '13 BS Chemical Engineering After graduation, Long accepted a job with Chevron Phillips Chemical where he worked until 2021. He joined Eastman Chemical in November 2021 as a project engineer and currently works as an engineering and project manager on various projects. He lives in east Tennessee.

"I enjoyed the Ambassadors program. I believe it's a good opportunity for students to meet and network with Lamar University alumni, faculty and administration. The students in the program represent some of LU's brightest students."

Eric Albaro Hernandez '16 BS Psychology Eric is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in curriculum and instruction in STEM education and also enrolled in the data analytics master's program at the University of Houston-Downtown. In addition, he is an instructor of psychology at Lamar State College-Orange.

"The LU Ambassadors program puts a face to Lamar University and has the ambassadors represent the university in a reciprocal relationship that builds appreciation for all things LU. Being an ambassador helped me build a sense of self confidence I didn't have. My fellow ambassadors are some of the best, brightest experts in their fields and always motivated me to succeed. Along with that, I have great friends for life! The Lamar University Ambassadors exalt the legacy of LU, and that is an honor and privilege I will always be thankful for."



Dr. Joshua Daspit '04 BS Political Science Josh went on to complete his M.B.A. at the University of St. Thomas in 2008 and a Ph.D. in management at the University of North Texas in 2012. He is currently an associate professor of management at the McCoy College of Business at Texas State University.

"Being a member of the Ambassadors program not only helped develop my leadership and networking skills, but the opportunity allowed me to become better acquainted with many administrators and faculty members. Now, as a professor, I look back at those experiences and realize the positive impact they had on my career path—especially as a first-generation college student—and every day I'm grateful for the opportunity to help students just as so many at Lamar University helped me."

Brendon Camp '22 BA Political Science, BA Criminal Justice Brendon started Harvard Law School in fall 2022. He has a goal to one day work for the Supreme Court.

"I was able to serve my peers and university while also becoming more acquainted with the university and those who ensure its success."

Kayla (Clifton) Adams '20 BBA Management Kayla currently works as the billing coordinator for CAT5 Resources in Nederland, a disaster recovery company that maintains generators that power cell phone towers during times of emergency.

"The Ambassadors program changed the trajectory of my college career and future. Being involved in the university at such a prestigious level helped me understand the bigger picture of higher education. It allowed me to be a liaison between the students and influencers of the university. Having this opportunity is something that prepared me for large-scale corporate meetings, difficult conversations and how to handle myself in most any scenario in the business world."



Kayleigh Romero '13 '17 BS Interdisciplinary Studies, M.Ed. Educational Technology Leadership Kayleigh teaches pre-calculus and geometry at Magnolia West High School in Magnolia, Texas. She is also pursuing a doctorate in education at Sam Houston State University in instructional systems design and technology. She has completed her coursework and is working on her dissertation.

"The Ambassadors program allowed for me to work on my leadership skills and helped to familiarize me with a world outside of my department. It allowed me to not only represent the university but also build interconnections with both peers and alumni from a broad spectrum of careers and industries."

Dr. Alex Edgerly '13 BS Biology 2013 Alex went on to earn a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston in 2017. He currently owns his own dental practice, Edgerly Dentistry in Bridge City.

"The Lamar University Ambassadors program was the first step to showing me what Lamar University had to offer. It allowed me to both grow as a student and young adult as it introduced me to peers in my anticipated career field. I will forever appreciate what the Lamar University Ambassadors did for both my education and future."



Tiffany Tran '22 BS Biology Tiffany is currently attending the University of Texas Health Science Center School of Dentistry in Houston to pursue a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree.

"The Ambassadors program enables top selected students to utilize their leadership skills to commit service to Lamar University and the SETX community. My experiences with the program have allowed me to partake in exclusive LU events, network with regional leaders and form bonds with like-minded students who are driven to succeed."



In class, on field and in office: *Hard work counts*

by Susan Johnston Taylor

Lisa Topping '13, '15, lives over 4,000 miles (or 7,000 kilometers if you're British like she is) from campus. Even at that distance, she remains an ardent supporter of Cardinal sports and the university as a whole.

Topping grew up in England and attended Lamar University on a soccer scholarship, earning bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology. Many of her favorite memories involve the soccer team, including her senior year when the Cardinals played in the final of the Southland Conference tournament. "We unfortunately got beat by SFA [the Stephen F. Austin State University Ladyjacks], but that was a really good memory as it was the furthest the program had ever got at the time. I have a lot of fond memories around the soccer team in general," she says.

Topping also speaks fondly of LU's Psychology Department. "During my master's, I made some really good friends at Lamar who I'm still in contact with today," she said. She gained operational experience as a graduate assistant for the soccer team and also served as a graduate research assistant for the psychology and political science departments, particularly with Terri Davis, associate professor of political science.

"There's a lot of support from faculty who promote learning and going to find knowledge yourself," Topping said. "Once you leave Lamar University, you've got to do that to continue to grow and develop in your career." After finishing her master's degree, she worked for a year at the Spindletop Center, which provides mental health services in Southeast Texas. Then, because she was an international student and did not receive an H-1B visa through the lottery system, she returned to England in December 2016.

Settling back into life in England was challenging after spending so many years in

Beaumont. Fortunately, Topping was able to bring Harlow, a beagle she'd rescued from the Humane Society of Southeast Texas while she was living in Beaumont.

Today, Topping lives in Preston, England, with her wife Caleigh, Harlow and their British-born cocker spaniel Rosie. She now plays in the 4th tier of English football for Chorley Women FC and combines her love of soccer (or football if you're British) and psychology into a job as business intelligence manager for EFL Trust, the charitable arm of the English Football League (EFL). "Each EFL football club has its own charitable organization, which are charities that do great work in their local communities using the power of the club badge and the hook of football," she said. "We support them in doing that work and evaluating those efforts to see what outcomes are achieved from delivering these programs."

A typical day for Topping might involve creating new monitoring and evaluation plans to support the data collected, analyzing findings and writing up conclusions, or meeting with stakeholders. "I love being able to see the good work that our football clubs and their community organizations do within their local area," she adds.

Topping says her time at Lamar instilled in her the importance of helping others. "We were very conscious about making sure that we gave back to the local Beaumont community," she says. For instance, the soccer team would visit local soccer clubs to support the teams and coaches.

Outside of her job, Topping gives back as a member of the LU Alumni Advisory



Council. "It's good to have somebody on the board that can answer any of those questions that international students may have," she said, adding that she hopes to help the university raise its profile internationally.

Topping's experiences at Lamar on and off the field have shaped her personally and professionally. "A big key is working hard and acknowledging that you've got to continue to work hard throughout your life and career," she says. "I think from my experiences at Lamar, that's definitely been instilled, whether it's from being on the soccer field or working hard in the classroom."



Finding Sweet Success

by Shelbe Rodriguez

I T ALL BEGAN WITH A BANANA NUT MUFFIN. Before Bryoni (Cambre) Prentice '08 would go on to participate in Food Network's "Christmas Cookie Challenge," she had dreams of sweet success dancing in her head. From humble beginnings in New Orleans, La., she has always been passionate about the culinary arts, where she found an outlet for her creativity. "I loved moving around; I never could sit still," Prentice said. "Being in the kitchen was something where I felt like I can just be creative." She recalled the first dish she ever made: banana nut muffins. Prentice first tried them at camp and hurriedly recreated the recipe when she arrived home. Since then, she has been on a culinary journey.

"That was the first thing I ever remember cooking. I always say I knew I wanted to be a chef," she said. On top of that, she added, Prentice was raised by a single mother who "couldn't even boil water."

"I remember growing up, we were always eating out at restaurants all the time, but I would find myself going back home, trying to recreate the dish, trying to figure out and pull out the flavors," she said. In high school, she practiced her culinary skills by cooking for people during the holidays. It was just by mere chance that Prentice would attend LU's Hospitality, Administration and Culinary Arts Program, she said, adding that she didn't even remember applying. "I knew some of my friends were going there, and so that was just kind of it," she said. Upon seeing the kitchen for the first time, however, Prentice knew she belonged. "I remember walking into that building and just being in awe of the commercial kitchen," she said. "It just sparked something in me where I was like, 'This is where I need to be.'"

Her determined curiosity has stood her in good stead as she moved from making cakes and other goodies for sororities as a college student to cooking for large events and then opening her own catering company—Bryoni Catering—focused on her signature New Orleans Cajun creole cuisine. Now, she also director of a nonprofit that runs a summer STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) camp to encourage girls' interests in STEM. In March, she was chosen as one of the top women in STEM in New Orleans.

She keeps the catering business on the move by offering innovative events. Cookies with a twist for girls' nights can mean teaching cookie decorating for fun or profit or pairing cookies with drinks. "One of my most popular things is cookies and cocktails," she said. "During holidays, I have companies who want me to market their product, so I do a lot of things with Bailey's or other cream-based liqueurs with pumpkin spice and matching cookies with chocolate liqueurs." For a private, in-home event, she brings everything from the place settings and candles to the four- or five-course meal for couples, including the cleanup. "I did one last week where the couple was celebrating their anniversary and had just had a set of twins, so I set up table settings in their home and

cooked all of the food in their kitchen. It's like your own private restaurant," she said. And her couples classes teach five to eight couples in a fully equipped rental home. "They're each cooking with me on hot plates. They get an apron and learn how to make three dishes: an appetizer, a main course and a dessert."

She believes a business is about so much more than money. "I think that the main challenge as an entrepreneur is setting yourself apart. People believe in you and your product when they know that you have a love for it. It's really a people industry. I believe that we're put on this earth to serve, and so showing people love and putting that love into your food, that just brings it to a whole other level." Her three daughters, ages 8, 10 and 12, keep her going. "Everything revolves around how can I serve people with a humble heart and kind of pave the way so my daughters can know they always need to have goals, have a drive."

Last fall, she competed on Food Network a second time—in the Halloween cookie competition—and won the \$10,000 prize.

Looking back on her time since attending LU, Prentice reflects on her philosophy regarding a work-life balance and what has changed since she graduated. "When you're in college, you have time to study, you have time to get into the kitchen, you have time to be creative, but when you get out, you have to be able to manage. It's also just responsibility and integrity because you can put out any kind of product. But is your product going to be something that, at the end of the day, you're proud of?" Prentice said. "You have to realize that every little thing you do is shaping you for what's coming next. Having a daily agenda is what you need to be focused on, knowing that every day is leading you to where you want to be."

After graduating from LU in 2008, Prentice's career began. She held an internship at MCM Elegante Hotel with Chef Chuck Harris '99—another LU alumnus—and eventually moved to Houston to become a culinary arts instructor. Prentice admitted that she also loved teaching; however, it wasn't until a Bible study session that she remembered

where her heart lay. "The pastor's wife was on stage and talked about how 90 percent of people go to school for one thing and they do not have a career in it," Prentice said. "It was something that just sparked in my head. 'I know that my gift is cooking. Why am I not just cooking?'"

That weekend, she began making menus, and, from sheer word-of-mouth, Prentice began booking chef gigs. Soon, an executive from the Food Network noticed her work—not with fine dining, but with cookies. The casting director of the network's "Christmas Cookie Challenge" first contacted her on social media, though Prentice admitted she had never seen the show. "It was so surreal. The casting director said, 'I'm going to send you an episode. I want you to watch it, and I'll give you two days to let me know if you're interested.' I'm an adrenaline junkie. I feed off stuff like that," Prentice said. "And the crazy part of this is, I don't even like making cookies."

During the middle of her family's move from Dallas to New Orleans, the Food Network put her on a plane to Knoxville, Tenn., with a driver waiting for her in the airport. When she arrived, Prentice began the experience of a lifetime. The most challenging part of the show, however, wasn't the actual baking, Prentice said. It was how she would be portrayed to the potential viewers. "At the end of the day, somebody's watching you, and you don't know who's watching. I need to make sure that I am a good example for those people who are following in my footsteps," she said. "That was my overall goal. You always just have to be intentional, knowing that you are paving the way for somebody else."

Her advice to up-and-coming professionals spotlights networking because it continues an education. "Networking and traveling are the best thing you can do to be exposed to things outside of your culture because, while I focus on New Orleans-style food, it was traveling and meeting other chefs and other people in the industry that helped me learn many tips and tricks. It's really been a blessing to me, everything that's just been given to me. It's a great a journey, and I know that it's only going to get better from here."

CARDINAL *love stories*

Ringpop?

**Bryoni (Cambre) '08 and
Fenwick Prentice '06, '07**

"We're 14 years married. He's a director with AT&T and the reason we keep moving because he keeps getting promoted. We're both doing really well. We met during Week of Welcome when I was at orientation. He saw me in a line trying to get a free t-shirt, and when we moved into the dorms, I ended up being two rooms down from him. Honestly, he was just the guy who had all the snacks. He always had honeybuns and ramen noodles, so we became friends, and the next thing you know we started dating. We dated all through college. He was two years older, but he ended up going back to get a second degree at Lamar, and then he started working for AT&T and moved back to Houston. We kept dating, and he proposed the day after my graduation . . . in the Target parking lot. He had decided a long time before, but I was shocked. He said, 'I have one more graduation gift for you.' And I was like, 'I have to get back to work, so I'm gonna pull over so you can just give it to me and I can go.' He got all nervous in the car and then said, 'We should just get married.' And here we are 14 years later with three little girls livin' life. It's funny because he's very introverted and goal-oriented, but I was always wanting some magical...you know...propose to me at an NBA game or something. But it was funny because all through college we would have dates, and he would always just bring me ring pops and joke like he was proposing all through college . . . 'We should be together' . . . and he'd give me a ring pop, so after he proposed, I got him a ring pop to seal the deal."



Audiology students advocate for hearing-care legislation

Doctor of Audiology students from the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences traveled to the state capitol in Austin March 1 for Audiology Advocacy Day, coordinated by the Texas Academy of Audiology. The group met and spoke with 20 state senators, representatives and Texas Speaker of the House Dade Phelan regarding hearing-care legislation reform.

Accompanied by Jo Mayo Endowed Assistant Professor of Audiology Anna Jilla, the Lamar University audiology students who traveled to take part were Desiree Cooper, Lindsey Sanford, Kaleigh Scott, Kelsey Spencer and Valerie Valdez. Specific bills that the students addressed include increased access to hearing aids to adults and children under private-insurance plans, a streamlined consenting process in order to follow up on infants with hearing loss and for the state of Texas to join the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact that will allow for more people outside of the state to seek care in Texas.

DSDE students and faculty discover Thailand deaf culture



Twenty members of the Department of Deaf Studies and Education traveled 9,000 miles to study and explore in Thailand.

Beverly Buchanan, program director for the departments master's program, journeyed with 13 undergraduate and three doctoral students, an ASL interpreter, an LU alumnus and the department chair with the goal of experiencing a different deaf community and education.

"I was a volunteer teacher of the deaf in Thailand for three years," said Buchanan. "The tour itself was designed based on my experience living in Thailand as it had a balance between Thai culture and Thai deaf education and community." Her prior experience in the country paved the way for the students to experience it as well. "The best part of the trip was watching students experience a new culture and language," she said. Most of all, they enjoyed interacting with deaf children at two different deaf schools," she said.



LU engineering graduates remain top in state, third in nation

For the second consecutive year, LU engineering graduates remain top in the state of Texas and third in the nation for 20-year net income, as noted by PayScale.com. PayScale, an online salary information company, conducts an annual report that measures the return on tuition investment 20 years after graduation for hundreds of public and private institutions. The report also analyzes in-state and out-of-state tuition costs, graduation rates and the number of years it takes to earn a degree.

According to the 2023 report, the 20-year net income of engineering graduates from Lamar University is \$1,143,000 — the highest in the state of Texas and No.3 in the country. With the new rankings, LU surpasses larger institutions in the country such as Stanford University (\$1,001,000), Rice University (\$984,000), and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (\$926,000) in 20-year net income.

In comparison, the estimated cost of a four-year degree at LU is \$89,000, about a third of the cost at MIT (\$276,000), Stanford University (\$282,000), and Rice University (\$256,000), as reported by PayScale.com.



Films on Beaumont's Black history aim to spark conversation

The history of Beaumont's Black community was on display Feb. 2. in the Dishman Art Museum auditorium during a screening of Beaumont's Black History-In Moving Pictures.

The historical fiction short film *The*

Example and the documentary *They Will Talk About Us: The Charlton-Pollard Story* were also screened, hosted by the Lamar University Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast and by the Division of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations.

With the impact the two projects have had on the local community and beyond and with the 80th anniversary of the 1943 Beaumont race riot in June, organizers decided to screen the projects to spark conversation and tell the stories that many may not know. "We felt it would be a great way to package them and to have meaningful conversations and share history. Whether people agree with what they see on the screen or agree with each other, having the opportunity to respectfully share thoughts, feeling and opinions is a powerful thing," said Gordon Williams, LUTV station operations manager and writer of both projects.

In 2022, students of LUTV News released *They Will Talk About Us: The Charlton-Pollard Story*, a 32-minute documentary that chronicles the people and legacy of the Charlton-Pollard neighborhood. The LU team interviewed former residents of the neighborhood, members of the community and local historian Judith Lindsey of the Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast. The film was accepted to the Prison City Film Festival, the Orlando International film Festival, the San Antonio International Black Film Festival and the Urban Mediamakers Film Festival in Atlanta. The documentary was an official selection of the EdiPlay International Film Festival in Paris, France, Jan. 5-8.



LU hosts international conference on death penalty

Sanaz Alasti, associate professor of criminal justice and director of the Center for Death Penalty Studies at LU, organized this year's The Future of Death Penalty Conference April 4 at the Lamar University Event Center with the theme "The Death Penalty as a Political Weapon." Speakers included Amherst College law professor and pioneer in the field Austin Serat and Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center in Washington, D.C. The conference brought together politicians, activists, lawyers and researchers with the aims of developing an informed position on capital punishment, producing a better understanding of capital punishment laws in Texas and Middle Eastern and Asian countries, and supporting national and regional abolitionist forces.

KVLU's Bayoulands series recognized

On Feb. 2, Shannon Harris, development director for KVLU Public Radio, made the four-hour trip to Austin to accept the Excellence in Media Achievement Award presented by the Texas Historical Commission for KVLU's radio documentary series *Bayoulands*, a series which tells the stories of the people and places of Southeast Texas.



The Texas Historical Commission is the state agency for historic preservation and their mission is to save the real places that tell the real stories of Texas. Each year, the THC recognizes and awards areas of the state that contribute to the preservation of Texas' heritage. One of those recognitions is the Award of Excellence in Media Achievement. Only one winner is chosen each year, and the winner for 2022 was KVLU Public Radio.

Season seven premiered in April. *Bayoulands* can be heard on every fourth Sunday of the month at 5 p.m. on 91.3FM, and *Bayoulands TALKS* can be streamed on the NPRone app, Spotify, Apple Podcasts and all other podcast platforms.



Bo Stults selected to lead human resources

In January, LU selected **Bo Stults** as associate vice president of human resources and talent management. Stults

brings more than two decades of expertise in human resources to LU to focus on recruitment and retention of top talent. "I'm excited to be joining the team here at Lamar University -- there's lots of talent and potential in LU Human Resources," Stults said.

Stults got his start in human resources in 2000 serving as human resources director at Lee College. Since then, the Baytown native has spent the past 23 years focusing on strategic human resources leadership at organizations such as Texas Children's and the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. Stults' specific areas of expertise are compensation and benefits, workforce analytics and human resource information systems.

\$700,000 grant to bolster updates for communication and media

The City of Beaumont recently awarded the Lamar University Department of Communication and Media more than \$700,000 to support the department's plans for renovations, new production equipment and relocating the widely known LUTV studio on campus. Tony DeMars, chair of the department, said he began working on the proposal for the grant months in advance, first working with Gordon Williams, operations manager for the studio, to identify equipment needs. "We have a variety of areas where the equipment had not been updated in recent years. We are moving the LUTV studio, and it's an important thing for us to be able to provide better service, better equipment and a better experience for our students," he said.

Chef Gates joins Cardinal family



The College of Education and Human Development recently welcomed its newest top chef to the culinary program. **Chef Casey Gates '05** is a Beaumont native, a graduate of LU's culinary arts program and a longtime lover of cooking food for the soul.

Gates, who joined LU as an adjunct professor in the culinary arts program in fall of 2022, took the reins of the program just after longtime Chef Charles Duit retired after more than 40 years of service at the institution. "I've been in the restaurant industry for a while and this just felt right -- it felt like the next step in my career," he said. "It's just me coming back and adding on to what Chef Duit has built for the last 40 years."

Gates said he plans to add more baking courses and fabrication, or butchery, for the students to get a more hands-on learning experience. "I try to relate a lot of my classes to my experience out in the real world," he said. "It's not just about cooking -- I'm showing our students how to order items, keep track of inventory, how much items cost and where they can make a profit. I'm showing them the business side because I want them to know that the culinary side doesn't just involve restaurants."

Jill Killough, department chair for the Department of Nutrition, Hospitality and Human Services, said, "One thing I'm super excited for Chef Gates to do is get into our local high schools. Most high schools have culinary arts programs, and he's a prime example of someone who's been in the field, owns his own business, has the knowledge and skills, and he can talk to those students about what a four-year degree can do for them," she said.

CARDINAL love stories

Kimberly (Jackson) '98 and Roy Hunter '98

We met the first day of nursing classes and started dating one year later after completing a nursing project and attending a concert by the Time. We graduated together in 1998, each with a B.S. in nursing. We moved back to East Texas and married in June of 2000. We have been married 21 years and have two daughters. Our oldest is currently attending Lamar University in the education program.

Courtney '10 and Nicholas Austin '10

I met Nic in 2006 when both of us were vocal music majors. I was a junior, and Nic was a freshman at the time. I didn't pay Nic any mind, but he slowly bothered me enough that I gave in and went on a date. The rest is history. We married in 2010 and had our daughter in 2013. We are actively involved in local theatre and sing in the church band.

Jasmine (Castillo) '12 and Andrew McMullin '15

While Andrew and I became friends in high school, we reconnected at Lamar in chemistry class and through the Catholic Student Center. We were married in 2014 on campus at the CSC. I am a registered dietitian, and Andrew works for the Houston Astros Foundation.

Michelle (Melancon) '07, '10, and Trevor Duell '11

We met as graduate music students at the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music in 2010. A few years later, we reconnected and got married! We both serve in the Army and are currently stationed in Hawaii.

Shaina (Escobedo) '18 and Austin Milan '18, '20

Austin and I met through mutual friends and started dating when he transferred to Lamar in 2015. We credit our relationship to Greek Life. We were married during the pandemic (July 2020) in an intimate ceremony with our immediate family. Austin received his bachelor's degree in accounting and his M.B.A., while I earned a bachelor's degree in marketing. Austin currently works at ExxonMobil as a global technology analyst, and I am the marketing manager for the University of Houston. We genuinely enjoyed our student life experience while at Lamar, so much so that I currently serve as the chapter advisor for the Gamma Phi Chapter of Alpha Chi Omega.

Kristina (Luckett) '13 and Jessie Morehead '13, '17

We both lived in Phase 3 in 2008-2009. Literally one door separated our two rooms, but we never saw each other. We met during the Woman to Woman Male Pageant in 2010. Kristina was on the executive board, and I was a contestant. We began to date shortly after. In 2012, I joined Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., and Kristina joined Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Kristina graduated in the spring of 2013 with her bachelor's in social work, and I graduated with my bachelor's in communication with an emphasis in education in the fall of 2013. We got engaged in 2015 and married in 2016. We currently live in Houston with our two kids, Jackson, 4, and Logan, 10 months. Kristina is now a licensed clinical social worker in Aldine school district, and I'm a Social Studies Department chair in Sheldon school district.



McMULLIN



BROWN



BRUCE



WOODARD



DOSCH



MILAN



DUELL



HUNTER



DAVIS



MOREHEAD



AUSTIN

Lauren (Smith) '03 and David "Kent" Dosch '06

Kent and I met at Lamar State College–Orange in fall 2001. We both transferred to Lamar University in fall 2002, and we were married that December. I graduated with a B.S. in general studies, and Kent graduated with a B.S. in business administration. We now live in Bowie, Texas, living our dreams of being a rancher and stay-at-home mom to 13-year-old twin boys, who keep us busy.

Amber (Haley) '03, '04, and Shannon Woodard '04

As college freshmen at LU, we met in our college algebra course (spring 2000 semester). Shannon graduated in 2004 with a B.B.A. in marketing. In 2003, I completed a B.S. in family and consumer sciences (dietetics) and then returned to LU to complete both my master's degree as well as the Dietetic Internship program in 2004. We have two children and will be married 19 years this May. We are both thankful for LU and proud to be Cardinals!

Shondrea (Holmes) '07 and James Brown '07

We met at LU 2004 while being a part of the Psalms 150 Gospel Choir as musicians. We started dating in 2006 and graduated in 2007, both with bachelor degrees. Now we have two beautiful children, a few businesses and have been happily married 12 years.

Thomas (Tran) '15 and Josh Davis '11, '15, '19

We met in 2008 while attending Lamar, but at the time didn't realize we shared classes together. Thomas and I worked together at a pet store before we realized we were in the same biology class. After we started dating, we got involved in various community events together, including Relay For Life at Lamar. Here we are 13 years later, just celebrated five years of marriage and as active as ever in the community. It's important to share common interests like we do, but we also couldn't be more different. For this reason, we complement each other so well and have the most amazing relationship. Thomas has put his degree to use by successfully managing a local bakery, while I am using my degrees with a local non-profit. We both have managed to put our degrees to use with careers we love.

Jo Catherine (Busceme) '65 and Tandy Nelson Bruce '66

We met in August 1964 in front of the Jefferson Theater in Beaumont. She and her date were coming out after the 7:00 show, and I was going in for the 9:00 show with her cousin. We stopped and talked, and later I asked her cousin if she had a boyfriend. He said, "No." So, I called her the next week, and we went to the first Lamar football game in the new stadium. We did not know each other while in high school, but we knew most of the same people. JoCat went to private Catholic school (St. Anthony '60), while I went to public school (Beaumont High School '61). She was a cheerleader and homecoming queen. I was basketball team captain and Jefferson County MVP. At Lamar, she was a cheerleader and member of Kappa Delta. I was co-captain of the basketball team. We realized that we lived only six blocks apart our entire lives. I married the girl next door one week after graduation, June 1966. We moved to Clear Lake City where JoCat had a teaching career and I took a job at the Johnson Space Center. She taught second, third and fourth grade for 30 years. I had a 40-year NASA career and was part of a team of scientists and engineers who put 12 men on the moon. We have been married 56 years and currently are retired, enjoying our daughter, two sons, grandson and six granddaughters. The thing I tell young people about going to Lamar is you will not be a number in a system; Lamar will always love you back.



Submit your Cardinal Love Story at
alumni@lamar.edu



We hope you enjoy reading about former classmates. If you have news to share—a position announcement, milestone, achievement, wedding, baby—or know the whereabouts of a lost alumnus, we want to hear from you.

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50s

George Jackson Wilson Jr. '54, B.S. chemical engineering, retired in 1985 after a career with Gulf Oil Corp. (now Chevron) that began at the Port Arthur Refinery and continued to corporate headquarters in Pittsburgh, Penn.; Tokyo, Japan; Vince Louisiana Refinery; Okinawa Japan Refinery; Houston domestic headquarters and ending as general manager of Port Arthur Refinery. He and his wife, Helen, live in Kingwood.

60s

George Hirasaki '63, B.S. chemical engineering, who earned his Ph.D. in chemical engineering in 1967, received the Distinguished Engineering Alumni Award from Rice University College of Engineering where he is an A.J. Hartsook Emeritus Research Professor. He and his wife, Darlene, live in Bellaire.

James "Bubba" Martin Jr. '69, B.A. history, serves on the board of the Inspire, Encourage, Achieve Program and was formerly the Juvenile Probation Chief for Jefferson County. He and his wife, **Carolyn** '71, B.S. elementary education, '78, M.Ed. elementary education, live in Nederland.

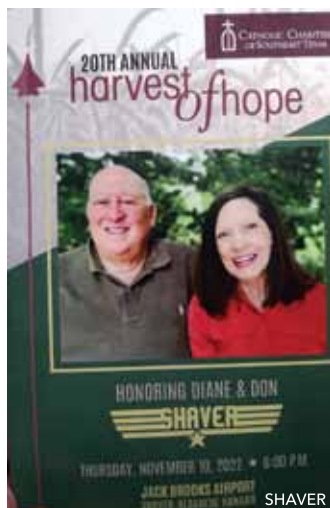
Paula (Tate) O'Neal '69, B.A. government, '79, M.Ed. counseling and development, retired as executive director of Some Other Place after 40 years of service. The Harvest for Lost Souls church named her a 2022 Game Changer Award Winner, and she lives in Beaumont.

70s

The Austin Plastic Surgery Foundation awarded **Beau Theriot** '70, B.B.A. general business, the Austin Smiles Cullington, Fox, Beckham International Service Award at their Wish Upon A Smile Gala Nov. 5, 2022. Theriot owns The Oasis on Lake Travis and is a treasured non-medical volunteer and leader with Austin Smiles. He and his husband, Juan, live in Austin.

After 50 years of public service, Distinguished Alumnus **The Honorable Robert "Bob" Wortham** '71, B.S. government, retired as Jefferson County Criminal District Attorney. He and his wife, **Karen (Guzardo)** '93, who manages KBM Investments Management, are President's Circle members and live in Beaumont.

Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas named **Diane (Howell)** '76, B.S. speech, and Distinguished Alumnus



Don Shaver '76, B.B.A. accounting, honorees of the Harvest of Hope Gala. Don is chief financial officer of LD Services and GulfStar Rental Solutions. Both are President's Circle members and live in Beaumont.

The South East Texas Regional Planning Commission elected **Glenn Johnson** '78, B.B.A. accounting, as fourth vice president. Johnson is the mayor of the city of Port Neches, where he lives with his wife, Andrea.



Byron Balentine '79, B.S. government, retired Dec. 31, 2022, as station manager of KVLU Public Radio after a 45-year career with the station. He and his wife, **Christine (Sohlinger)** '92, B.S.W. social work, A.A.S. nursing, '12, who is a registered nurse with Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas, live in Beaumont.



Congratulations to **Clayton Trier** '73, B.B.A. accounting, on the March publication of his book *The Outskirts of Redemption* by Defiance Press & Publishing. On Amazon, it has ranked

as a No. 1 Best Seller in Teen and Young Adult Nonfiction on Suicide Social Issues. Trier began his career with Arthur Andersen & Co., becoming partner after nine years before leaving to become CEO of an NYSE client company. As an entrepreneur, he has been an investor in multiple industries, including the music business as it was converting to digital format and healthcare. He and his wife, Ginya, live in Houston.

Deborah (Bowling) Verret '79, B.B.A. management, '05, M.B.A. business administration, who earned her juris doctorate in 2009, retired as vice president of quality, risk and compliance for Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas after more than a decade of service. She lives in Beaumont.

80s

Richard Hebert Jr. '81, A.S. law enforcement, B.S. criminal justice, retired as a resource officer for Nederland High School. He and his wife, Sherri, live in Nederland.

Gayle Butaud '85, M.Ed. supervision, married Tommy Reynolds III Oct. 22, 2022. She retired from Lamar University in 2021 and lives in Nederland.

Brittian Featherston '85, A.S. law enforcement, '87, B.S. criminal justice, is U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, making him the top prosecutor for 43 counties. He and his wife, Amy, live in Lumberton.

The Rotary Club of Beaumont honored **Ester Holloman** '86, A.A.S. food service management, with a Vocational Excellence Award in recognition of her 41 years of service at Lamar University. She works for Compass Group USA Inc. and lives in Beaumont.

The South East Texas Regional Planning Commission elected **Michael Sinegal** '88, B.S. criminal justice, as president. He is the commissioner of Precinct 3 for Jefferson County and lives with his wife, Yvette, in Port Arthur.

Sisters **Clara (Brown) Cooper** '89, B.S. sociology, who earned her M.B.A. in 2001, was honored at the Sisters with Superpowers Redefined Gala. She is executive director of L.I.F.E. Houston and lives in Pearland.

The Port Neches Police Department promoted **Cheri Griffith** '89, B.S. biology, to chief of police. She lives in Port Neches.

Porchanee White '89, B.S. elementary education, who earned her M.Ed. in 1998 and her Ph.D. in educational leadership in 2001, retired as clinical instructor for the Lamar University College of Education and Human Development. She owns Pages and Words Consulting and lives in Beaumont.

90s

Cassie (Clark) Balla '90, B.B.A. office administration, teaches career, technology, and yearbook for Silsbee High School. She lives in Silsbee.

Robert Bertrand '90, married Patrice Diane Ortego Oct. 15, 2022. Robert owns Cotton Cargo, and they live in Beaumont.

Ken Mazzu '92, B.F.A. studio art, showed his work during an exhibition Dec. 10, 2022, to Jan. 21, 2023, Contemporary Texas Regionalists Holiday Group Show at the Foltz Fine Art Gallery in Houston, where he lives.

Lamar University honored **Stacie Granger** '93, B.A. theatre, with the Distinguished Staff Award. Granger is the administrative associate of the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing and lives in Nederland.

Catalina Castillon '94, M.S. deaf studies/habilitation, performed the title role of the short comedy film *La Culpa Fue de la Berta*. She and her husband, Kevin Dodson, live in Seville, Spain.

Paul Shipman '94, B.S. mathematics, '99, M.Ed. administration, '08, Ed.D. educational leadership, retired as principal of Hamshire-Fannett High School. He lives in Groves.

Wendy (McBryde) Lapeyrolerie '96, B.S. psychology, '99, M.S. psychology-industrial and organizational, teaches at Nederland High School. She and her husband, Michael, live in Vidor.

Dian (Duke) Meadows '96, A.A.S. nursing, retired as a registered nurse for Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas. She and her husband, George, live in Beaumont.

Todd Senters Sr. '96, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is vice president of Graduate Medial Education for HCA Gulf Coast. He and his wife, **Dawn (Shuler)** '95, A.A.S. nursing, who is a registered nurse with the Julie Rogers Gift of Life Program, live in Beaumont.

Richie (Collins) Hunter '99, M.B.A. business administration, is vice president of university communications for the University of Oregon. She and her husband, Bruce, live in Eugene, Ore.



00s

Stephanie (Dollar) Polk '00, B.B.A. general business-advertising, received the Leisure Tourism Marketing, Community/Local Engagement, Website Design and Effectiveness and the Destination Marketing Organization of the Year awards from the Texas Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus. She is the convention and visitors bureau manager for League City, where she lives with her husband Darren.



Robin (Cummings) Woolridge '00, B.A. English, who earned her juris doctorate in 2003, is associate attorney with MehaffyWeber PC. She and her husband, **Nathan Woolridge** '94, A.A.S. process operating technology, live in Beaumont.

Shannon (Pier) Allen '01, M.Ed. administration, '13, Ed.D. educational leadership, was recognized as the Friends of Texas Public Schools 2022-2023 Ambassador of the Year. She is superintendent of Beaumont school district and lives with her husband, **Red** '90, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who owns Red Allen Cowboy Art, in Beaumont.

Linda (Seay) Allen '02, B.B.A. management information systems, is assistant controller and senior vice president at Stellar Bank. She and her husband, Jeff, live in Buna.

Justin McCullough '02, B.B.A. management information systems, is vice president of Willow. He and his wife, **Caroline (Michael)** '01, B.S. psychology, who works for Spindletop MHMR, live in Leander.

Vickie (Brown) Sutton '02, B.S. criminal justice, co-owns Kenya Raisa Dance Studio. She lives in Beaumont.

Harris Health System named **Willie Broussard Jr.** '03, B.S. family and consumer sciences-hospitality administration, "Rockstar" Rookie of the Year. He earned an M.B.A. in human resource management and is a human resources professional with Harris. He lives in Cypress.

Michelle (McKenzie) Copeland '03, B.B.A. general business, is children's coordinator at First Baptist Church

Nederland. She and her husband, Michael Copeland '01, B.S. industrial technology, who is a senior electrical specialist for Motiva Enterprises, live in Beaumont.

Charlie Health promoted **Amber (Barrington) Buchanan** '04, B.B.A. marketing, '08, M.B.A. business administration, to regional director of clinical outreach in Texas. She and her husband, Holt, live in Beaumont.

Luke Hebert '04, B.B.A. management information systems, is creative director of Riceland Healthcare and owns Anvil Design Co. He and his wife, **Angie (Arrington)** '09, B.S. communication, who is the communications director of NavSav, live in Beaumont.



Paul Lemoine '04, B.S. criminal justice, retired as chief of police for the city of Port Neches. Crimestoppers awarded him the Honorable Service Award Nov. 1, 2022. He and his wife, Sharon, live in Port Neches.

Sarah (Houser) Mannino '04, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, received the Tribe Tribute Award for her outstanding service to Warren school district in the athletics department at Warren Junior High School. She and her husband, Kenneth, live in Silsbee.

Cindy (Shelton) Thomas '04, B.B.A. finance, owns The Cottage Quilting and Embroidery. She and her husband, **John Thomas** '81, A.A.S. drafting technology, who works for BASF TOTAL Petrochemicals, live in Port Neches.

Austin Begnaud '05, B.B.A. accounting, '06, M.B.A. business administration, is accounting controller for XX Artists. He and his wife, **Kristin (McDonald)** '04, B.B.A. human resource management, '06, M.B.A. business administration, who owns SOULSearch Recruiters, live in Conroe.

Hamshire-Fannett High School promoted **Marla (Dale) Gilmore** '05, to principal. She and her husband, **Kyle** '03, B.S. kinesiology, who works for C.S.I., live in Hamshire.

The Texas Municipal Human Resources Association re-elected **Holly (Killingsworth) Guidry** '05, B.B.A. human resource management, as a trustee of the board of directors for



2022-2023. Guidry is human resources director and director of civil service for the city of Nederland. She and her husband live in Nederland.

Tamera (Thompson) Williams '05, B.S. communication, earned her M.B.A. from LU in December 2022. She is a certified pharmacy technician with Sam's Club Foundation, and she and her husband, Anthony, live in Houston.

Laura Hinson '06, B.G.S. general studies, received the Partner Sales Manager of the Quarter for Q1-2022 from Informatica, where she is a business development manager. She lives in Austin.



The Better Business Bureau named **Dawanna Jones** '06, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '11, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, who earned her master's degree in public administration in 2015, a 2022 Woman of Integrity. Jones is an adjunct instructor for Lamar Institute of Technology, owns Senoj Professional Business Services and teaches for Memorial High School. She lives in Beaumont.

Matt Lambeth '06, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, earned his doctorate in physical therapy and began his practice, Lambeth Physical Therapy, in 2020 with 1,600 sq. ft. of rented space before expanding to 5,000 sq. ft. and 10 employees by October of 2022. He lives in Warren.

Readers of the Beaumont Enterprise named **Rachel (Martinez) Sexton** '06, B.S. kinesiology, Best of the Best Preschool Teacher. She teaches at Learning Hands Preschool and lives with her husband, Cody, in Port Neches.

TMEA music alumni reception

LU music alumni and friends gathered at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference in San Antonio for an after-hours networking social Friday, Feb. 10.



Golden Wright '21, interim dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication; Evie Clifton; Jeanette Fresne, chair, Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music



Kobey Emmons '20; Evie Clifton, coordinator of Alumni Affairs; Michael Moreau-Monier '07; and Gerard Moreau-Monier



Cynthia Resendez '19, Corby Lee '18, Nick Quintana '19, Bekah (Wells) Woodard '17, '21 and Adrian Woodard '18



Amanda Bordelon-Ross; Bekah (Wells) Woodard '17, '21; Kaila (Spoonemore) Jackson '15, '17; and Trent McGee '18



Katie (Lusignan) McKeenan '94; Patty (Newton) Williamson '02, '22; Ryan McKinney '20; Keith Walls '19; Kim Guevara '19; and Michelle Martinez

The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce named **Joshua Smith** '06, B.B.A. management, past president of the board of directors. He owns Bill Clark Pest Control and lives with his wife, Sarah, in Vidor.

Elle (Barnard) Congelliere '07, B.S. psychology, is the founder and CEO of Pave Group and owns Elle Corp. She and her husband, Noah, live in Irving.

The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce named **John Morrell** '07, M.B.A. business administration, president-elect. He is president of Texas First Bank and the Latin Mass Society of Beaumont. He and his wife, **Brianne (Mirabella)** '04, B.S. nursing, who is a registered nurse with Christus St. Mary Hospital, live in Beaumont.

Brandy (Fregia) Roy '07, B.S. biology, '19, M.Ed. administration, is assistant principal of Nederland High School. She and her husband, **Jason** '03, B.S. communication, who is a marketing representative for HealthSouth Diagnostic Center, live in Port Neches.

Congratulations to **Ashley (Barnes)** '08, B.B.A. accounting, and Brian Bradley on the birth of their son, Theodore James, Nov. 6, 2022. Ashley is controller for FMC Technologies, and they live in Aurora, Colo.

Scott Hawk '08, B.S. health and kinesiology, earned his M.B.A. in December 2022. He is executive pastor of Praise Church, and he and his wife, Amber, live in Beaumont.

Olivia (Harrington) Trahan '08, B.S. nursing, works for VitaDrip IV. She and her husband, **Blake** '09, B.B.A. accounting, who is an accountant with Ernest & Young, live in League City.

Haley (Murphy) Tyson '08, B.G.S. general studies, '17, M.Ed. clinical mental health counseling, is director of the center for career and professional development for the Lamar University Division of Student Engagement. She and her husband, **Chris** '06, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '11, M.Ed. administration, who teaches at Vincent Middle School, live in Lumberton.

Aaron Bonvillion '09, B.B.A. finance, '10, M.B.A. business administration, is a real estate agent for Keller Williams. He and his wife, Melissa, live in Houston.

Daniel McLemore '09, B.S. communication, '21, M.B.A. business administration, is vice president of marketing for Calcasieu Teachers and Employees Credit Union. He and his wife, **Chelsea (Clarke)** '11, B.S. graphic design, who is an academic advisor with Lamar University Academic Affairs, live in Orange.

Josmery (Ramirez) Mulvahill '09, B.M. music, is starring as a lead in The First Step, a short film about a man who struggles with his Christian faith following a personal tragedy. She and her husband, **Brian** '10, B.M. music, who is a sales operations manager for Mometrix Test Preparation, live in Beaumont.



LU Athletics Director Jeff O'Malley and Reggie Begelton '15

Cardinal Hall of Honor

A three-time All-Southland Conference selection, Reggie Begelton is a Beaumont native who came to LU in the early stages of the program's rebirth and proceeded to rewrite the school record books. A 2015 graduate, Begelton owns the school's single-game (18), season (82) and career (227) records for receptions. He also set the school's all-time record in receiving yards (2,435) and finished second all-time in touchdown receptions (20), missing the mark by just one grab. Ranked among the school's all-time leaders in points, Begelton finished his career as the Southland Conference's second all-time leading receiver. A first-team All-SLC pick as a senior, Begelton has become one of the elite receivers in the Canadian Football League, helping Calgary to the 2018 Grey Cup, and has been named a CFL All-Star. He has also spent time in the NFL with the Green Bay Packers. Begelton was unable to visit campus for the Oct. 22 ceremony along with his fellow inductees so he attended the Feb. 4 event.



Jordan is a software engineer for Revature, and they live in Missouri City, Texas.

Tiffany (Rider) Perkinz '13, B.A. English, '17, M.A. English, '19, M.Ed. administration, is assistant director of study abroad and student exchange for Lamar University. She and her husband, Jordan, live in Groves.

Lance Warren '13, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, '20, M.S. kinesiology, is assistant campus director of Bob Hope High School-Port Arthur. He lives in Beaumont.

Beaumont school district honored **Ashley Wilbourn** '13, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '22, M.Ed. administration, with the Above and Beyond Award. She teaches reading and science at Sallie Curtis Elementary School and lives in Beaumont.



Congratulations to **Jiselle Wilson** '13, B.S. communication, on the birth of her son, Aven Kembrae, Oct. 30, 2022. She is communications and marketing manager of the National Council of Jewish Women and lives in Houston.

Michelle Coon '14, B.B.A. human resource management, '16, M.B.A. business administration, married Blake Matheson Nov. 12, 2022. They live in Beaumont.

Region 6 named **Monica (Burciaga) Fricke** '14, M.Ed. school counseling, Counselor of the Year. She is a counselor at Brenham Middle School and lives with her husband and two children in Round Top.

Congratulations to **Brian Roberson II** '09, B.S. communication, '10, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, and his wife, Jackie, on the birth of their daughter, Harper Grace, Nov. 1, 2022. The National Alliance of Black School Educators named Brian, who is principal of B.F. Terry High School, Principal of the Year. They live in Rosharon.

Christie (Ritter) Shoemaker '09, B.S. nursing, is a family nurse practitioner at the Christus Trinity Clinic in Lumberton. She and her husband, **Elvis** '00, B.S. nursing, live in Beaumont.

10s

Congratulations to **Lauren Holdorff** '10, B.B.A. general business-advertising, and Isaiah Kriesien on the birth of their son, Isaiah, Dec. 10, 2022. She is talent manager for Hilltop Residential Management, and they live in Rosharon.

Grayson Meek '10, B.A. history, '17, M.A. history, is director of university events for the University of Northern Colorado.

Teresa (Cossey) Simpson '10, M.Ed. supervision, '14, Ed.D. educational leadership, is director of institutional research and effectiveness for the University of Houston-Victoria. She and her husband, **Art** '95, B.S. kinesiology, '16, Ed.D. educational leadership, who coaches track for Memorial High School, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Whitney (West)** '10, B.S. family and consumer science-dietetics, and **Zachary Stiles** '15, M.B.A. business administration, on the birth of their son, Murphy Reed, Sept. 15, 2022. Zachary is a sales manager with Roy West Team of Guild Mortgage, and they live in Beaumont.

Joshua Davis '11, B.S. criminal justice, B.S. sociology, '15, M.B.A. business administration, '19, M.P.H. public health, is vice president of development for Legacy Community Health. He and his husband, **Thomas** '15, B.B.A. advertising communication, B.B.A. marketing, who is a baker for Debbie's Delights and owns Davis Duo Design Studio, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Christian Franks** '11, B.B.A. management information systems, and his wife, Shavon, on the birth of their triplets, Arielle, Israel and Ezekiel. Christian is a functional business analyst with CGI, and they live in Katy.

The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce named **Rebekah Maxwell** '11, B.B.A. retail management, who earned her M.S. in science-international marketing in 2012, president of the board of directors. She owns ReStep Marketing and lives in Beaumont.



Dragon Industrial Wrap promoted **Catie (Byerly) Miller** '11, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. management, to vice president for finance. She and her husband, **John Miller Jr.** '08, B.B.A. management information systems, who is president of 5 Under Golf Center, live in Beaumont.

L3Harris Technologies promoted **Joshua Smith** '11, B.S. electrical

engineering, to senior system engineer. He lives in Greenville.

Brittnee (Rodriguez) Barnes '12, B.S. psychology, is an insurance agent with her own agency, Brittnee Barnes State Farm Insurance, which was inducted into State Farm's Chairman's Circle Agency. She and her husband, Christopher, live in Beaumont.

Miles Haynes '12, B.S.W. social work, '14, M.P.A. public administration, is part of the city of Beaumont's Community Development Committee and has led Beaumont's Youth Council. He is a business development manager for Americom Marketing and lives with his wife, **Rachel (Davis)** '11, B.B.A. accounting, who is an accountant for Moran Enterprises, in Beaumont.

Beaumont Board of Realtors awarded **Tania Castelan** '13, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, its Team of the Year Award. She is a real estate agent with Connect Realty and opened DAR Event Studio in December 2022 lives in Beaumont, where she lives.

Cindy (Bennefield) Daniel '13, teaches Pre-K at Deane Bozeman School. She lives in Panama City, Fla.

Judson Daws '13, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics, was recognized as the 2022 Mickey F. Mehaffy Pro Bono Attorney of the Year. Daws is an attorney with his own firm, The Daws Law Firm, which won the Small Firm Pro Bono Award from the Jefferson County Bar Association. He and his wife, **Lena (Dulaney)** '09, B.S. kinesiology, live in Silsbee.

Elisabeth Maxwell '13, B.S. biology, who earned her master's degree in marine biology and marine policy in 2017, is a dive officer for Moody Gardens. She lives in Galveston.

Jordan Mobley '13, B.B.A. management information systems, married Jasmine Pierre Sept. 1, 2022.

CLASS NOTES

Alumni on campus: Nursing

We love when LU Alumni come back to campus to mentor current students. The Dishman School of Nursing senior nursing students recently had the opportunity to learn more about the legal components of nursing care when Larry Eastep '81, B.S. criminal justice, and John Davis '80, B.B.A. accounting, visited campus to share their experiences and knowledge related to "Legal Liability Issues in Nursing."



DSDE alumni reception

The Department of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education hosted alumni at the ACE-DHH Conference Feb. 1 in San Antonio at the Menger Hotel.



Ashley Greene '20, assistant professor; Katrina Cue '20; David Meek '18; in front of David in the blue is Heidi MacGlaughlin '18, assistant professor; Megan (Bourliea) Wimberly '12; Sean Hauschildt, instructor; Holly Metcalf, student; Jamie Bencak, student; Andrea Alford, student; Frances Courson '22; Pauline Ballentine, student; Sarah Goodwin, student; Autumn Barker, interpreter; Department Chair Diane Clark

The Art Museum of Southeast Texas hosted an exhibition titled ART NATIONS: The Snowmen, which showcased the snowmen paintings and drawings of Art Nations '79, B.F.A. art, Aug. 18-Nov. 13, 2022 as part of its Café Arts series. He lives in Arlington.

Near Night Moon, 2021, oil paint, colored pencil, and conté on illustration board.



The Cole Art Center at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, featured a work by Ken Mazzu '92, B.F.A. studio art, titled *A Cove in The Marsh*, gouache, 22"x30", in its 2023 Texas National, a juried exhibition held April 14 through June 30, 2023. His 2018 watercolor *Roller Pass* was featured in a group exhibition at Houston's Art Car Museum in the 16th Annual Open Call Exhibition: Blue.



Congratulations to **Eritrea (Griffith) Jean-Felix** '14, B.S. biology, and her husband, Jerry, on the birth of their daughter. Eritrea teaches in Houston school district, and they live in Orange.

Shelby Price '14, B.B.A. management information systems, married Michael Giganti Nov. 5, 2022. They live in Frederick, Md.

Allie Smith '14, B.S. mechanical engineering, teaches engineering, robotics, and career and technical education for Nederland High School. She is also co-owner and wedding coordinator of Two Southern Wildflowers Event and lives in Nederland.

Congratulations to **Kalah (Fulcher)** '14, B.S. family and consumer science-family studies, and **Casey Word** '14, B.S. mechanical engineering, on the birth of their daughter, Charlotte James, Oct. 17, 2022. Kalah teaches life skills for Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School, and Casey is a fixed equipment reliability engineer for LyondellBasell Industries. They live in Beaumont.

Vivian (Caloobanan) Arevalo '15, B.S. biology, is an academic advisor for Lamar University Undergraduate Advising. She and her husband, Marco, live in Hamshire.

Tod Byerly '15, B.A.A.S. social work, is manager of distribution services at Lamar University. He and his wife, **Keshia** '15, B.A.A.S. social work, '17, M.Ed. clinical mental health counseling, live in Beaumont.



Texas Speaker Dade Phelan appointed **Wendy (Kitchens) Elmore** '15, Ed.D. educational leadership, to the Industry-Based Certification Advisory Council. She is provost and executive vice president of Lamar State College-Orange and lives with her husband, Brad, in Orange.

Congratulations to **Kaila (Spoonemore)** '15, B.M. music, '17, M.M. music, and Anthony Jackson on the purchase of their new home in Magnolia.

Hamshire-Fannett Intermediate School promoted **Morgan (Stockman) Rayburn** '15, M.Ed. administration, to principal. She and her husband, Jay, live in Winnie.

Congratulations to **Annette (Merrill)** '15 and Cody Robinson on the birth of their son, Leo Matthew, Sept. 14, 2022. They live in Nome.

South East Texas Regional Planning Commission promoted **Rachael Robinson** '15, B.S. political science, '21, M.P.A. public administration, to transportation planner. She lives in Beaumont.

Fort Bend school district named **Jasmine Rogers** '15, B.S. health education, 2022-2023 Teacher of the Year. She teaches fourth grade at Lantern Lane Elementary School and lives in Richmond.

Kelsey Young '15, B.S. psychology, earned a master's degree in sports management in 2017 and is director of stewardship for the 12th Man Foundation. She lives in Bryan.

Congratulations to **Gerald Domoneck** '16, B.S. industrial technology, on the purchase of his new home in Beaumont. He is a math coach for Homer Drive Elementary and lives in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Andrea (Dearing)** '16, M.S. environmental engineering, and **Cody Elenz** '16, M.S. kinesiology, on the purchase of their new home in Orange Beach, Ala.

Congratulations to **Morgan (McClain)** '16, B.S. nursing, and **Austin Greenway** '11, B.G.S. general studies, '17, B.S. industrial technology, on the birth of their son, Chance West, May 25, 2022. Morgan is a nurse with Christus Southeast Texas St. Elizabeth, and Austin teaches chemistry, forensic science and physics for East Chambers High School. They live in Beaumont.

Maria Gomez '16, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is learning experience designer for The TJX Companies. She lives in El Paso.

Congratulations to **Gentry (Wiebusch)** '16, B.S.W. social work, and Mark Gonzalez on the birth of their daughter, Sylvie Nyx, Nov. 22, 2022. Gentry is a social worker for Family Services of Southeast Texas, and they live in Beaumont.

Erik Guerrero '16, B.B.A. management, is a wealth management banking specialist for Merrill Lynch. He and his wife, **Angelica (Cardenas)** '19, B.S. psychology, who is an admissions counselor for Lamar University, live in Beaumont.

Haley (Hebert) Henson '16, B.S. speech and hearing science, '18, M.S. speech-language pathology, is speech therapy team supervisor for Aveanna Healthcare. She and her husband, Nicholas, live in ???

Congratulations to **Rebekah (Drummond)** '16, B.B.A. retail management, B.B.A. marketing, '17, M.B.A. business administration, and **Matt Hunt** '17, B.S. mechanical engineering, on the birth of their son, Charlie Allen, Nov. 16, 2022.



Pre-Med Table: students, front from left, Sindi Castillo, Folasade Asoro, Stephanie Barron, Britney Brevell, Waverlee Cooper, Caroline LeBlanc and Alyson Vu; back from left, Sergio Mendez, Jacob Thompson, David Matherne, faculty host and biology Chair Randall Terry, host Dr. Will Pickard, Zaid Mohammed and Miguel Arevalo

A Dinner & Conversation

Welcoming students to A Dinner and Conversation Feb. 7, successful alumni hosted tables for majors in matching fields of study to offer career advice and exploration.



Alumnus host Dr. Will Pickard '14 with Juan Zabala '07, vice president of University Advancement



Classmates Mike Brezina '89, left, and Chris Graham '90, who were in each other's weddings soon after graduation, but hadn't seen each other in years, unexpectedly reconnected years later as alumni hosts of Dinner and Conversation Feb. 7.



Business Table: Faculty host and associate professor of accounting Orrin Swift; alumni host Mike Brezina '89, senior vice president of human resources at Hilcorp Energy Co.; students Katie Bourgeois, Caleb Buse, Kayla Camilleri, Kaylee Goodspeed, Amarie Guillory, Ali Huda, Jaylen LaBarge, Alicia Lawal, Jacob Murphy and Sunny Walker



Engineering Table: Front from left, Annabelle Broussard, Isaac Moreno, Jacob Smith, Jonah Smith, Lucia Ortiz; back from left, Kelvin Elgar, Tyler Gray, Paul Ivory, faculty host and chair of the Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering Tracey Benson, alumni host Angie (Caninenberg) Vargas '05, Ryan Shugart and Luis Arevalo



Education Table: Faculty host Freddie Titus, interim vice president of diversity, intercultural affairs and community relations; alumni host Brian Roberson '09, '10, principal of B.F. Terry High School in Lamar school district; students Emma Bridwell, Iris Carrasco, Gabby Gaspard, Vavah Kamasa-Quashie, Maria Meyer, Vy Nguyen, Stefany Rico, Chloe (Raczko) Simien, Emaley Torbert and Shelby Williams



Computer Science Table: Faculty host and computer science Chari Stefan Andrei; alumni host Chris Graham '90, systems engineer at ExxonMobil; students Kalan Bonnette Tomisin Egbewale, Nicholas Hanson, Sushant Khanal, Thomas King, Zuhair Merchant, Kahty Nguyen, Tien Nguyen, Deepak Shrestha and Bhuwan Prasad Upadhyay



Nursing Table: Alumna and faculty host Cynthia (Kellam) Stinson '75, '80, chair of the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing and students Daisy Calero Estrella, Te'a Fields, Amanah Khan, Avery McLain, Jule Nguyen, Hayley Rico, Madison Taylor, Hannah Thomas, Madeline Tzul, Emily Wilkins and Trenton Young

| CLASS NOTES |

Rebekah is administrative manager for Southwest Marine Construction, and Matt is a mechanical drafter for Citadel Completions. They live in Lake Charles.

Congratulations to **Erica (Edgerly)** '16, B.S. family and consumer science-fashion retailing/merchandising, and **Jacob Rone** '17, B.B.A. management information systems, on the purchase of their new home in Orange. Erica owns Merle Norman and Milli Kids Boutique and Jewelry Luxury Lashes, and Jacob is an engineer for Scallon Controls Inc.

Caitlin (Tassin) Vinning '16, B.S. nursing, earned her master's degree in family nurse practitioner in December 2022. She is a surgical nurse with The Surgical Specialty Center of Baton Rouge and lives in Prairieville, La., with her husband, Joseph.

Congratulations to **Daytona (Brown)** '17, B.S. nursing, and **Ryan Blanchette** '17, B.S. nursing, on the birth of their daughter, Leia Day, Oct. 19, 2022. Daytona is a registered nurse with Houston Methodist St. John Hospital, and Ryan is a registered nurse with UTMB Health Clear Lake Campus Hospital. They live in Friendswood.

Michelle Butler '17, B.B.A. retail management, married Jordan Cease Oct. 22, 2022. Michelle is a client onboarding specialist for Smart Business Concepts, and they live in Wylie.

The Texas Workforce Commission awarded **Jamarcus Corks** '17, B.S. communication-broadcasting, a Certificate of Success. He is coordinator of special populations for the Lamar Institute of Technology and lives in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Brittany (Lopez) Cozad** '17 and her husband, Jesse, on the birth of their first child, Jace Lee, Nov. 30, 2022. Brittany teaches English as a Second Language at Port Neches-Groves High School. They live in Port Neches.

Siara Dodds '17, B.S. political science, who earned her juris doctorate in 2021, married Vantz Derek Haas Sept. 24, 2022. Siara is an associate attorney with Wilkins Gire, and they live in Beaumont.

Kaysi (Cox) Manuel '17, B.S. communication, earned a master's degree in library science in December 2022 and is librarian for Harry McKillop Elementary School in Melissa school district. She and her husband, Brandon, live in Sherman.



VIZENA



Past and current Distinguished Alumni from left: Keith Giblin '86; Chris Bates '08; Vernon Durden '69, '04; Ellen (Walker) Rienstra '62, '80; Shannon (Pier) Allen '01, '13; Carl Griffith Jr. '81, '83, '87 (2023); George Hirasaki '63 (2023); President Jaime Taylor; Hester (Briscoe) Bell '61 (2023); Fred Vernon II '12, '13, '13 (2023); J. Don Warren Jr. '63; Paula (Tate) O'Neal '69, '79; Elaine (Norman) Shellenberger '74; and Hyattye Simmons '79



Daylyn Turner '07, left, and Don Pumphrey '88



Vel (Dailey) Martin '63, '77; Disa (Kuhn) Albanese '76; Hester (Briscoe) Bell '61; Sally (McDonald) House '59, '67



George Hirasaki '63, J. Don Warren Jr. '63, John McManus Jr. '63



Fred '12, '13, '13, and Wafa (Hammad) Vernon '08



Karen (Guzardo) -93 and Bob Wortham '71

Distinguished Alumni Awards

The special awards ceremony Feb. 24 honoring the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients drew a crowd of alumni and friends. Honorees are Hester (Briscoe) Bell '61; Carl Griffith Jr. '81, '83, '87; George Hirasaki '63; Fred Vernon II '12, '13, '13



Carl Griffith Jr. '81, '83, '87, Lori Ryerkerk-Griffith, and Grant Woodburn



Ellen (Walker) Rienstra '62, '80, left, Judy (Walker) Linsley '67, '77



Wea '76 and Catherine (Chu) Lee '75



Linda and Joe Domino '75



Gilbert Adams Jr. '64 and Mary Margaret Groves

Benjamin Vizena '17, B.S. computer science, B.S. physics, married Anna Purtscher Nov. 14, 2022. They live in Grand Junction, Colo.

Morgan (Leblanc) Sumrall '17, B.S. nursing, is a staff nurse-inpatient with Texas Children's Hospital. She and her husband, **Tyler** '16, B.S. communication, who is a senior public relations specialist for Academy Sports & Outdoors, live in Cypress.

Brooke Chilla '18, B.S. political science, passed the North Dakota Bar Exam. She is a staff assistant for Majority Leader Mike Lefor and lives in Kulm, N.D.

Maverick Natural Resources promoted **Ryan Donina** '18, B.S. environmental science, to senior environmental specialist. He lives in Houston.

Angelica Figueroa '18, B.S. family and consumer science-nutrition, dietetics and hospitality, '19, M.S. nutrition, is quality coordinator and program manager of the diabetes education department for the Christus Health Foundation of Southeast Texas. She lives in Beaumont.

Garrett Gaspard '18, B.S. communication-corporate, owns Avenue Axe and is president of G&T Insurance Agency. He and his wife, Taylor, live in Port Neches.

Congratulations to **Ashley (Vanhaverbeke)** '18, B.S. nursing, and Aaron Graham on the birth of their second child, Austin Ray, Nov. 30, 2022. She is a registered nurse at the Medical Center of Southeast Texas and for West Groves Early Learning Center Pre-K. They live in Groves.

Alfredo Herrera '18, B.S. criminal justice, is a probation officer for Fort Bend County. He and his wife, Autumn, live in Needville.

Desiree Miranda '18, B.S. nursing, is a DAISY Award recipient at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital, where she is a registered nurse. She lives in Lumberton.

Tammy Tran '18, B.B.A. advertising communication, '21, M.B.A. business administration, is business analyst for Amegy Bank. She lives in Houston.

Haili (Stratton) Villa '18, B.B.A. marketing, owns TWFG Villa Insurance. She and her husband, Arturo, live in Nederland.

Madison Welch '18, B.S. nursing, married **Christian Dao** '17, B.S. mechanical engineering, Sept. 30, 2022. Madison is a registered nurse with HCA Houston Healthcare Clear Lake, and Christian is a mechanical and structural engineer for Boeing Co. They live in Houston.

Pamela Allen '19, B.S. nursing, is a registered nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at the Medical Center of Southeast Texas and a DAISY award winner. She lives in Groves.



Shelby (Bickham) Curl '19, B.S. criminal justice, is talent acquisition coordinator for Seamless.AI. She and her husband, Jordan Curl '20, B.S. biology, live in Lubbock.

Congratulations to **Bailey (Wilson)** '19, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, and **Beau Gilbert** '14, on the birth of their daughter, Henlie Kate, Oct. 17, 2022. Bailey is a business development representative for Quorum Software, and Beau is an account manager for Dr. Pepper Snapple Group. They live in Lumberton.

Congratulations to **William Holman** '19, B.S. political science, on passing the Texas Bar Exam. He is an associate attorney with The Faubus Firm and lives with his wife, **Kimberly (Suire)**, '18, B.B.A. management, B.B.A. general business, in Houston.

Alicia Jenkins '19, B.S. biology, teaches criminal justice at Bob Hope High School in Port Arthur, where she lives.

Cassie Jenkins '19, B.S. communication-journalism, is a reporter for Community Impact and a travel writer for ViaTravelers. She lives in ??? (relative)

Cade Johnson '19, B.S. biology, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, '20, M.B.A. business administration, married Mary Evans Oct. 8, 2022. They live in Lumberton.

Judge Jeff Branick swore in **Victoria LaFleur** '19, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. accounting, who earned her juris doctorate in 2022, after she passed the Texas Bar Exam. She is a commercial litigator with Scheef & Stone and lives in Fort Worth.

Congratulations to **Emily Lawrence** '19, B.S. political science, on passing the

Texas Bar Exam. She works for Ricker Law Firm and lives in Orange.

Juan Martinez '19, B.A. modern languages, teaches Spanish and French for Vidor High School. Lives?

Kelly (Meeuwssen) McKenzie '19, B.S. biology, is associate account manager for Collabera Inc. She and her husband, **Blake** '16, B.G.S. general studies, live in Houston.

Congratulations to **Monica Ozuna** '19, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, and **Angel Pedraza** '20, B.S. chemical engineering, on the birth of their son, Theo Pedraza Ozuna, Nov. 13, 2022. Monica teaches sixth grade science at Cedar Bayou Junior High School, and they live in Baytown.

Connor Raborn '19, B.S. political science, is a law clerk with Shackelford, Bowen, McKinley & Norton. She lives in Texas.

Congratulations to **Alesha Rushing** '19, B.S. criminal justice, on the birth of her daughter, Naomi Joy Washington, Oct. 28, 2022. She is a wraparound specialist at Pershing Middle School and lives in Houston.

Juliana Ocampo '19, B.B.A. management, B.B.A. general business, married **Eduardo Trevino** '20, B.S. mechanical engineering, Oct. 8, 2022. Juliana plays for the Columbian National Soccer Team, and they live in ???

20s

Clarence Anderson '20, B.S. communication, who earned his M.B.A. in 2022, co-owns Moments, Memories N Such with his brother, **Marcus Anderson** '17, B.B.A. general business. They live in Houston.

Alexandra Easley '20, B.S. nursing, is a labor and delivery nurse at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital and recently received its DAISY Award for her actions in keeping a family's son out of the NICU. She lives in Beaumont.

Brittney Little '20, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics, earned her M.B.A. from LU in December 2022. She is a lending assistant with Texas First Bank and lives in Beaumont.

Amber McNeil '20, B.S. exercise science and fitness management,

received a long-term care administrator certificate from Texas State University and passed her licensing exam for Nursing Facility Administrators. She lives in Vidor.

Katie Scott '20, B.B.A. entrepreneurship, B.B.A. general business, opened her Port Neches business, Meridian Wine Bar, in December 2022.



Erial Smith '20, B.S. health education, is project manager for Eli Lilly and Company. She lives in Dallas.

Ean Tillett '20, B.A. history, is director of the National Vietnam War Museum. He lives in Wichita Falls.

Congratulations to **Sam Arthur** '21, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. management, and Landon Prejean on the birth of their daughter, Gloria Ann Dec. 14, 2022. She is a human resources generalist with Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas, and they live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Madelyn Hamilton** '21, B.B.A. management, and Taylor Eubanks on the purchase of their new home in Cypress. Madelyn works for ProMiles Software.

Amany Hammad '21, B.S. nutrition, married Adam Zayed Sept. 5, 2022. They live in Glen Ellyn, Ill.

LesLee (Harmon) Henry '21, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. accounting, '22, M.B.A. business administration, M.S. accounting, is a professional associate with Funchess, Mills and White. She and her husband, Martice, live in Baytown.

Denita Jones '21, Ed.D. educational leadership, is supervisor of student support services for Port Arthur school district, where she lives.

Katey McCall '21, B.S. political science, won the Fall 2022 Advanced Moot Court Final Round competition at Texas Tech. She lives in Orange.

Carli (Cates) '21, B.G.S. general studies, married **Zachary Murdock** '22, B.S. biology, Oct. 22, 2022. Congratulations to them on their purchase of a new home in Port Neches. Carli teaches third grade at Ridgewood Elementary.

Kristena Pavia '21, B.S. family and consumer science-family studies, married Justin Yawn Oct. 29, 2022. They live in Beaumont.

The American Educational Research Association chose **Keith Reeves** '21, Ed.D. educational leadership, as the winner for 2022 Division H's Outstanding Publications Competition in Category 5: Outstanding Dissertation. He is the assistant principal for Skyline High School and lives in Front Royal, Va.

Congratulations to **Corey Bierbaum** '22, B.S. nursing, and Christie Cormier, current Lamar University student, on the purchase of their new home. Corey is a nurse extern with Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Congratulations to **Amber (Maiden?)** '22, B.S. nursing, and **Ryan Dollinger** '14, B.S.W. social work, who earned his M.P.A. in 2017 and his M.S.W. in 2018, on the birth of their daughter, Cora Elizabeth, Sept. 19, 2022. Ryan is a social worker with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and an online instructor for Texas Southern University. They live in Humble.

Ana Garcia '22, B.S. mechanical engineering, married Rafael Salvador Orozco May 28, 2022. They live in Reseda, Calif.

Congratulations to **DeShonna Harris** '22, B.S. theatre and dance, on the birth of her son last fall. She lives in Houston.

Adelin Hernandez '22, B.S. psychology, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, married Elijah Eason Aug. 20, 2022. They live in Beaumont.

Heather (Smith) Kugler '22, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, works in business development for the Texas Pulmonary Institute. She and her husband live in Nederland.

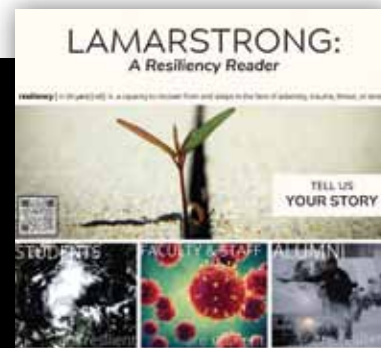
Ayokunle Oni '22, B.S. chemical engineering, is an engineering project manager with Apple and lives in San Jose.

Isabelle Scott '22, B.S. communication-public relations, is program and events coordinator for Dallas Regional Chamber. She lives in Dallas.

TELL US YOUR STORY!

LAMARSTRONG: A resiliency reader

LU's Center for Resiliency wants your story of resiliency to include in a book of collected writings from the broader LU community to be published in fall 2023. If you have an inspiring story to share of how resiliency has looked for you, mind or body, loud or quiet, as poetry, short fiction, visual art, or personal or scholarly essay, submit your work as an alumnus by June 30 at lamar.edu/lamarstrongreader. The Center will award \$100 to five outstanding submissions.





Let's Explore the World Together!



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Rock solid resolve

by Susannah Pate

For Hilary (Allen) Deville '13, '17, baking is more than an art, it's a science. Growing up learning the culinary basics from her grandmother and experimenting with various types of recipes, she developed an interest in baking after realizing how much chemistry was involved. It has since become an avid passion of hers, and her long-standing enthusiasm is now the driving force behind a booming business.

Deville's journey as an entrepreneur began at a time when the world was full of uncertainty. In May of 2020, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, she found herself without a job following a company-wide layoff. Instead of losing hope, she quickly sought a new course of action.

"I am not one to just twiddle my thumbs and wait for something to happen," Deville said in an interview with *Voyage San Antonio*, "so with the encouragement of my husband, Trey, I fervently researched the Texas Cottage Food Law, and decided to sell cookies out of our home—and with that Opal & Onyx was born!"

Drawing inspiration from geology, another interest of hers in which she received her first degree at Lamar, Deville chose the name Opal & Onyx as a testament to everything she loves, represented by two minerals "distinctly different in visual essence" but nearly identical in chemical makeup, a "kind of yin and yang" that summarizes her life with her husband and her personal



ideals. "Everything thing I love I like to put in my business," she said. Even her cookie names, from opalescent sugar and cavernous chocolate chip to earthquake oatmeal and cosmic cookies and cream, echo Deville's appreciation for natural science. She combines her two passions to make her own distinctive mark.

Because of increasing demand, what started out as a small, home-based business has grown into a commercial bakery shipping nationwide. Baking every day out of her shop in Boerne and managing all business concerns including customer service, advertising and wholesale, Deville is also a regular vendor at local farmer's markets, takes special-order reservations for celebrations and custom confections, and teaches popular cookie decorating classes. Despite how her menu has developed over the past few years, she still sticks to her roots, specializing in homestyle gourmet cookies inspired by her grandmother's cooking, which lends a personal touch to her treats.

Deville takes naturally to the role of a leader, using her strengths as a problem solver to meet setbacks with optimism and creativity. Being an entrepreneur and business owner, she says, is "the most empowering thing [she's] ever done" and gives her the opportunity to contribute to her community by doing what she loves. Wanting the same success for others, Deville actively promotes women-led businesses like hers, hosts summer camps to educate children in both STEM and the culinary arts, and often donates to numerous local non-profits.

Along with her degree in geology, she has also earned an M.B.A. from Lamar. "The human resources [M.B.A.] concentration helped me get back on my feet at the start of the pandemic," she said, and it continues to inform her decisions as a business owner, especially in regard to overseeing marketing and finances.

"In the sweets business, we do a lot of celebrating," she said. "It's why I like to do this. It's fun to celebrate with others."





Veteran coach Pete Rossomando joins Cardinals

by James Dixon

On Dec. 10, 2022, Lamar University introduced Pete Rossomando as its next head football coach. A former NCAA Division II National Coach of the Year and 2017 Eddie Robinson National Coach of the Year (NCAA FCS Coach of the Year) finalist, Rossomando is a coaching veteran with nearly 30 years of experience at all levels of the game.

His love of the game stems from two fundamentals: work reward and player development. “For me, it’s more about the attention to detail in this sport,” he said. “You don’t have to be the smartest guy to get the job done. You can outwork people. I think I’ve built my career around outworking others. I also really enjoy the people aspect of the industry. I like working with 18- to 22-year-old young men and helping them find their way. Some will come here with great ambition, and others will come with no ambition, but my goal is to always to put them on the right path, so they have a successful life as a dad and husband and in their professional life.”

Rossomando became the program’s 11th head coach since LU transitioned into a four-year program in 1951, and just the fourth leader since bringing back the program prior to the 2010 season.

He came to the Golden Triangle from Charlotte, N.C., where he spent the previous two seasons as the UNC-Charlotte 49ers’ offensive line coach and was eventually named interim head coach. Since moving to Southeast Texas, he has come admire “the passion the people in the community have for this city, for Lamar University, and their desire to be good, not only in football, but across the board in all sports. That has really impressed me about Beaumont.

Prior to his arrival in Charlotte, Rossomando spent two seasons as offensive line coach at Rutgers (2019) and Vanderbilt (2020). Before his time in the Big Ten and Southeastern conferences, Rossomando was head coach at Central Connecticut State. During his time with the Blue Devils, he led the program to its first NCAA FCS Playoff appearance in program history. CCSU posted an 8-4 overall record in 2017 and won the Northeast Conference title with a perfect 6-0 mark. His efforts on the sideline drew praise from national voters as he was named a finalist for the Eddie Robinson National Coach of the Year award.

Rossomando made the head coaching jump to the NCAA FCS level after spending six seasons at the University of New Haven where he built the program from the ground up. He spent his first season at UNH putting together a staff and recruiting players to take the field for the 2009 campaign after a five-year football hiatus. Over the course of the next five seasons, New Haven posted a 42-13 (.737) overall record, including a 33-8 (.805) conference mark. During his final four seasons on campus, Rossomando guided UNH to two eight-win seasons, a 10-win campaign and an 11-win season. The Chargers won two conference titles and advanced to the NCAA Division II playoffs in 2011 and 2012.

A four-time conference coach of the year selection and the 2012 Liberty Mutual National Division II Coach of the Year, Rossomando has been part of seven conference championship teams as either a head coach or an assistant, as well as serving on staff for the 2002 ECAC Bowl Championship squad and the 1997 NCAA National runner-up team during his first stint at New Haven.

In working with the Cardinal team, Rossomando’s assessment midway through spring camp prioritizes the quarterback position as the season approaches. “Quarterback is the offensive piece that always has to be developed first. I think we are really good at corner, running back and receiver. I think we also have some talent at defensive end—our exterior pass rush is really good,” he said. “We also have talent at inside linebacker.”

He says building relationships with coaches, players and staff is what he enjoys most about coaching. “It’s special here because the relationships you have with your administration from the top down, that’s not something you have at different places. Community is always important to me, no matter where you are, and we have a great community here,” he said. “In coaching, that’s really what you look for is community because it makes your job so much more enjoyable on a day-to-day basis.”



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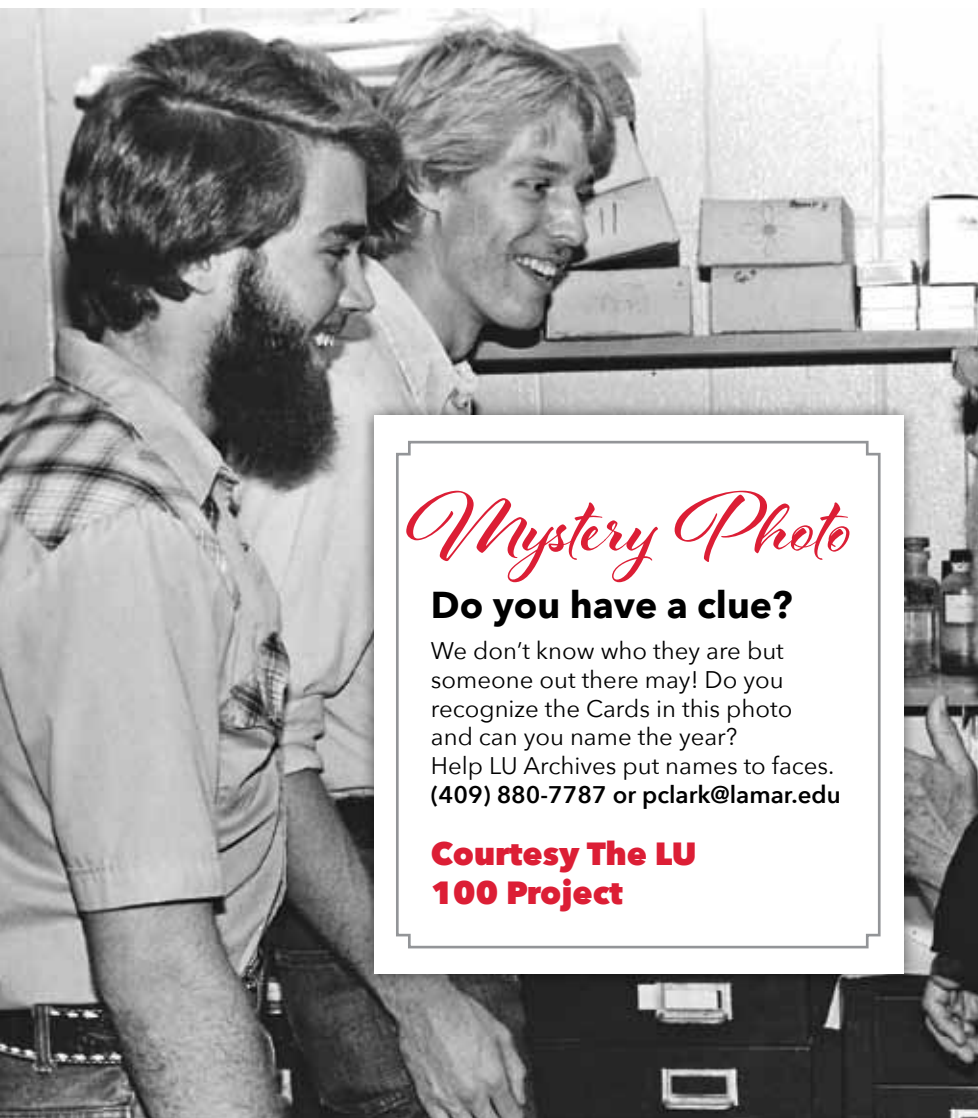
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Cadence Vol. 51, No. 1

In the last issue's mystery photo, Jennifer (Alley) Hydes '71 recognizes the setting as Gentry Hall, probably the room—with the chair sporting a lyre, the AXO symbol—of a tennis-playing Alpha Chi Omega member, who is chatting with a Gamma Phi Beta member in 1982 or soon thereafter, if the April 1982 *seventeen* magazine cover on the wall is anything to go by. Hydes remembers that Gamma Phi and Alpha Chi were next to each other in Gentry Hall separated only by their shared laundry room. As for the other photo on the back cover of vol. 51, no. 1, those cheerleaders are still a mystery, so look it up online at lamar.edu/cadence to see if you can identify any of the three women in the shot.



Mystery Photo

Do you have a clue?

We don't know who they are but someone out there may! Do you recognize the Cards in this photo and can you name the year? Help LU Archives put names to faces. (409) 880-7787 or pclark@lamar.edu

**Courtesy The LU
100 Project**

